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ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

ASPECTS

OF THE

SOCIAL PROBLEM

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

EDITED BY

BERNARD BOSANQUET

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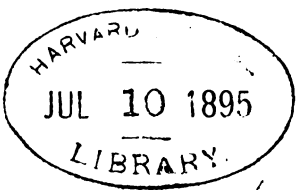

PREFACE

THOUGH the public mind is full of the problems of social reform, it is remarkable how little literature, combining trained observation in the social field with reasonable theory, is available for the general reader. The present volume of studies has been brought together with the view of helping to fill this gap, and of indicating, however imperfectly, the sort of work by which it should further be filled. The contributors may claim that they have all attempted to qualify as social students in two definite ways. They all possess prolonged and systematic experience in practical efforts to improve the condition of the poor, and they have all paid careful attention to the methods and principles of social reform. Their studies, written on different occasions, with different purposes, and drawn from different fields of observation, appear, when compared together, to have a single principle at their root. The writers have seen and felt as well as reflected that the individual member of society is above all things a character and a will, and that society as a whole is a structure in which will and character "are the blocks with which we build."

Among the influences which operate upon the will, they of course take note of some that are due to material or economic conditions. At any given moment such circumstances are apt to present themselves as fixed quantities and irresistible causes; but in watching the

social process, life by life and generation by generation, the skilled observer becomes aware that circumstance is modifiable by character, and so far as circumstance is a name for human action, by character alone.

It is this principle which operates in the following papers through all the differences of their subject-matter. It shows itself in the sympathetic scrutiny of the skilled helpers of the poor, who, in their analyses of causes of distress or methods of reform, insist on entering into the mind, habits, and feelings of the classes under consideration, and on comprehending their lives from the beginning to the end. In the treatment of history and statistics the same tendency may be noted. The statistical student especially, who is trained by practical contact with the effort to help the poor, is led to plead for better statistical instruments and a finer use of them, because the human mind is so delicate and so complex a growth. Not even the ways of birds can be understood from mere books and measurements, and man "is of more value than many sparrows." If political economy is to form part of a true social science, its abstractions must be criticised in the light of a more complete and a finer experience. No science of organisms can dispense with highly-trained observation of life. The scientific logician will corroborate this view. To count means to count something, and all inference from enumeration depends on the precise nature of that which is enumerated. It is long since Lotze drew attention to the readiness with which this fact is forgotten.

The student of ethics, if he has any practical training, will confirm the principle which experience teaches. Some readers will indeed remember how, in Goethe's play, a son cannot be got to understand that the grand titles which he has learnt at school belong to his own father who is standing before him; and so the ethical teacher, who argues all day

long that ethical forces are the real powers of the world, is apt to shrink and turn aside when he is assured by the student of life: "Only give scope to character, and it will unfailingly pull us through." And yet this is simply the fact which he has continually been proving.

It should be definitely recognised as the extreme of folly to despise the material conditions of life. The principle here suggested is not, as often misrepresented, that some undefined miracle of moral agency is loftier and better than any intelligible causation. The point is simply that all conditions practically mean human action, and all human action issues from the *whole* disposition of human minds. Therefore the disposition of the mind as a whole is the determining condition of all conditions, and though men may suffer through the character of others, they can gain and retain no permanent advantage excepting through their own. Now characters or dispositions react altogether differently to conditions which are quantitatively and materially the same, according to the means by which they come, and their consequent relation to the feelings and expectations of the persons concerned. Help from a dutiful son may put heart into a man to struggle through his distress; the same money, thrown to him by a stranger, may crush him to the earth. And thus a well-meaning attempt to effect an improvement may quickly quadruple the evil, and such a result is observed with terrible frequency; whereas, when approached in a different way, the evil may vanish before a sure and persistent growth of good. The difference between two such attempts will be found to depend mainly on the different relation of the methods adopted to the character both of those to be benefited and of any who have been accomplices in the mischief which it is desired to arrest.

In social reform, then, character is the condition of

conditions, and this is the principle which the following studies illustrate in observation, in criticism, and in theory. In the statistical papers the numerical tables have been reduced to a minimum, and it is hoped that these articles will be found as attractive as they are important.

The thanks of the contributors are due to the editors of the following periodicals for permitting the republication of articles which have appeared in them:—*The Contemporary Review* (1), *The National Review* (1), *The Economic Journal*[1] (2), *The International Journal of Ethics* (1), *The Charity Organisation Review* (2). Nine of the papers are now published for the first time; two have appeared in Reports of Poor Law Conferences.

BERNARD BOSANQUET,

Editor.

[1] These appeared as three separate articles.

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I[1]

THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP

By B. Bosanquet

I have been considering how most usefully to deal with so vast a subject as the Duties of Citizenship. And it has occurred to me that a certain amount of theory may be the most practically valuable contribution which I in particular am able to offer to you. It is agreed, I believe, among authorities on technical education that no reading or lecturing can be a substitute for workshop training. And therefore I shall avoid every attempt to instruct you what in particular you are to do. For that you need workshop training, and your presence here shows that you know where to go for it. Nor again would it be useful that I should attempt to give even general advice as to the line of life and of work which it is most expedient to take up. Individual lives must be moulded by individual judgment.

But perhaps there is some use in trying to throw light on the connection between our several lives and the society in which we find ourselves. It may be possible to exhibit some perfectly simple conceptions which may be capable of serving as clues to the unity of life underlying the confusion of purposes and opinions by which we are surrounded.

[1] I. and II. are lectures delivered at the Women's University Settlement, Nelson Square, Southwark.

1. *The Ancient City.*

Many of you will think that I am beginning far away from the subject if I take the idea of citizenship first in its simplest form—as we see it in the ancient Greek world—in the little sovereign state with its central town and surrounding territory, the whole being equal in extent to a small county, and in population to an English city of the second rank. And to-day we will not scrutinise the numerous defects of these little commonwealths, but will try to gain inspiration from their positive ideas. And in order to grasp these ideas, and to apprehend the pure and simple nature of citizenship, we must forget a great part of what surrounds us to-day. We must forget our divisions and estrangements, our "interests," as we call them, the claims of birth and of wealth, the regimented and incorporated forces of labour and of capital, of industry and of commerce, of agriculture and of manufactures; we must forget the distinction of town and country, so deep that half the nation hardly knows how the other half lives; we must forget the vast and powerful organisations and traditions of the Church, the army, the civil service, and the law; and more than all, we must learn to forget the daily contrast of the executive and official staff which we vaguely call the Government, with the mass of unofficial persons who practically regard themselves as mere units among millions of their like, living indifferently under the protection of the law. In place of all this, let us call up a different picture. Let us think of an independent sovereign community of some 20,000 men, the whole free population amounting to 100,000 souls, more or less. There is free intercommunication between the town and the rural territory which immediately surrounds it; the freeman, as a rule, has at least a small landed property, and is able to enjoy a fair proportion of leisure from manual toil. Industries indeed exist, giving brightness and variety to life, but heavy and monotonous labour is little in amount, and chiefly devolves upon slaves, who were to the Greeks what machinery, kept in its place, might be to us.

What was it that the citizens of such a city chiefly thought of? What filled their minds from day to day?

First, we may suppose as with us, the care of their family, their property, and their livelihood. But probably this was less often than with us an all-absorbing anxiety, and never a cause of absolute isolation. It was a source, no doubt, of occupation and eagerness in life, but it did not shut a man up within the walls of a great industry or profession, with its routine and traditions, so as to put all else out of sight. One would be doing, on the whole, what others did, and their work would bring them into contact mentally as well as physically.

Secondly, the need of civic self-defence, and perhaps the desire of aggression, would be ever present to their minds. The citizens were their own army; they had to be, and always were, ready to fight; their very livelihood was bound up with the gain or loss of their city as a whole. To return without your shield—the heavy shield which could hardly be carried in flight—involved disfranchisement not at Sparta only but probably in every Greek commonwealth. The Athenian confirmation vow, as we might call it, began with the words, "I will not disgrace my shield nor desert my fellow-soldier." The leading states were almost always at war by sea or land, and whatever may have been the other consequences of this state of things, this much is certain, that the simplest form of citizen duty, which is also the ultimate form, could hardly be absent from the mind of a Greek of the great time. His life, he knew, was at the disposal of his country.

But, thirdly, in a typical leading state of Greece there would be a good chance of any individual having to think about government and justice. They worked much by large boards and commissions, and by huge juries; every citizen would have to serve in some administrative capacity now and again. The sovereign power, moreover, and, indeed, the actual executive responsibility, rested with the *primary* assembly of all the citizens; there was no throwing off the decision on the shoulders of elected representatives. Your personal vote helped to decide, and, in voting, you

knew that you must stand to the decision of the majority with purse and person. "We who stand here to-day have in a large measure created our country's greatness;" that is how an Athenian spoke. No modern assemblage of persons can unite in words like those.

Fourthly, they were bent on enjoyment and distinction; first, perhaps, bodily, but secondly, intellectual. Distinction for a Greek citizen was to be the best man in Greece in battle, or at running or wrestling; to be the most beautiful man; to have the best horses; to possess and to appreciate in your city the most beautiful things—the stage-plays, the singing and dancing, the statues, the pictures, the temples.

Thus the meaning of citizenship was plain. Nothing stood between you and your fellows in the community. Citizenship was obviously and visibly a life, your whole life, with common dangers, common responsibilities, common enjoyments, and common ambitions. Your education, your character, your religion, came direct from the written and unwritten laws of your city. Your happiness was to fill satisfactorily a recognised place, to be acknowledged by your fellows as doing so, and to appreciate in common with your city and your race what Pindar emphatically calls "the pleasant things of Greece."

And so Socrates and his followers, the teachers to whom we owe our definite scheme of virtue and of duty, were only insisting upon the essence of the life around them, when they told us that man's excellence was to do that which in the system of citizenship it belonged to him to do; that the true citizen was he who knew both how to govern and how to be governed; that man was naturally a social being; that society was not artificial, but the outcome of human nature and the condition of human morality; and that though, historically speaking, it originated out of the needs and impulses of bare living, yet, nevertheless, its abiding purpose was that all its members should live well. And to live well meant for him to live that life in which the separate human animal feels and knows himself to have his true being in an "end,"—as

philosophers call it—an aim or purpose or will which is at once in the deepest sense his own, and also real and permanent and greater than his separate self, having actual existence in a social group with its sense of community, its spirit and its laws. And such a life is called living well, because only in it, and not without it, can the nature of a human individual unfold its capacities and become the most and highest that it has in it to be.

Now, under Greek conditions, this relation of the individual to the community was tolerably easy to see. The commonest Greek citizen could never altogether forget that his actual existence was bound up with his discharge of civic duty. He would not be allowed to forget it. If he and others were careless of bodily training, or neglected their drill by sea or land, their city might be defeated in its next battle with the people over the way, and terrible losses or worse might happen in consequence to his family or to himself. And so the mind was not distracted; the path of duty was plain; the soldier was a citizen soldier, the poet a citizen poet, the artist a citizen artist, and the philosopher a citizen philosopher. Even the rebel, the bad citizen, did not in his rebellion lose the civic character; on the contrary, the frightful bitterness of the civil wars of Greece was due to the fact that both sides were fighting (as in the Florence of Dante) for the very centre of their existence—for that which was the whole world to them.

2. *The Modern Wilderness of Interests.*

In modern life it is very much harder to see our way. According to our birth, our education, and our profession, we fall into a groove, and some one or two huge incorporated "interests" fill our horizon. We are very much let alone by the general community, very *free* in that sense; but this does not seem to develop in us either character or originality—there is always a cry that national character is decaying. Perhaps this is so far true, that character is not developed by being let alone nor yet by

mere mechanical pressure of circumstances, but only in as far as we succeed in detecting some plan or value in the circumstances that press upon us, in relation to which we can assert ourselves.

But it is very hard to detect such a plan or value in our surroundings to-day, compared with those of the citizen of a small ancient commonwealth. We have not their definite set of duties *on which the common good visibly depended.* We common folk do not realise that many people are going to be much the worse or much the better for the way in which we spend our lives. The interests which fill the horizon for each of us are very different, and many of us never think of trying to connect them together. We have our ideas of right and wrong, and the little drama of our own character and destiny plays itself out on its tiny little stage, but we do not see how our fate and character is the fate and character of our nation. One of our little stages on which our life is enacted is the family. It is one great root of morality. But it takes divergent forms as a purpose in the modern world. Family selfishness has two main directions—to the inside and to the outside. The family may be sacrificed to the world of business or pleasure, or the claims of the community may be sacrificed to the family. In either case, both sides of life are distorted, and the selfish self-complacent family is a symptom of the same disease which preys on the household in which no one but its head is treated as existent. How often family pride obscures and narrows the view, and distorts our idea of the society around us. And the same is true of "society" in the narrower sense. Many of us do not grasp the idea of belonging to a human community at all; we judge everything by the standard of a class or clique; we make no serious attempt to see any connection between the life of this small minority and the life of the nation. Those whom we call the educated, the cultured, the distinguished, have very frequently, owing in great part to their disadvantages of birth and education within a narrow circle, no germ of a genuine idea as to the relative importance of their own lives and those of

the general mass of the community, nor any capacity of judging what is or is not socially mischievous. There is not much to suggest such a connection in many homes and circles. It needs a considerable effort to realise. People are born into a certain life and sphere, and there is so much isolation in the modern world that they can simply go on in their routine without feeling any difficulty. Education does not mean, as it should, the victory over idols of the class.

So with the industrial class interest. One can observe that men born into it think that no other exists. Of course they have one great advantage in point of truth—viz. that their life is more typical than ours. There are few who live as we do, there are many who live as they do. Against that we have nothing to set but our power of acquiring knowledge. Still, industry, especially a single industry, is not all that makes up the national life.

Then there is the characteristic modern contrast of Church and State. I think we all feel how difficult in practice this is to handle—I do not mean with an established church in particular, but with all visible churches,—the temporal power always comes up in one form or another, and I think I may say that any one brought up with an exclusive feeling for any visible church has a great difficulty in grasping a spiritual connection with the community as such. Where a church is concerned there is apt to be a side issue in all handling of practical questions, just as with every other strong association; only a body of this kind is very strong and very important as a rival to the civil community. It is the most bewildering of all the schisms which the ancients had not to deal with and we have. If we could regard the Church as the intensification of our civic sentiment and not as its antagonist we might manage better than we do. So, again, the modern soldier is hardly a citizen soldier. He thinks of his regiment, his queen, and his flag, but he hardly knows what he fights for. His courage would not satisfy the conditions of valour as laid down by Plato or Aristotle.

Thus, and in many other ways, the idea of citizenship,

which was the first thing to a Greek, has almost ceased to be a controlling conception for us. It is apt to be narrowed down to what concerns the parliamentary election, and the burning question of the hour, or sometimes it includes the municipal elections in a very intelligent town, or at a striking crisis. We know our family, our neighbourhood, our trade, our church ; but our citizenship we are only just beginning to recognise, except in the parliamentary franchise, which women, more than half the community, do not possess.

3. *Citizenship as a Clue to the Adjustment of Duties.*

Before saying a word on the question *How* we should recognise our citizenship, it may be well to ask ourselves, "Is it really necessary to recognise it all?" Perhaps, you may think, citizenship was indeed the form which duty took in the ancient world, but as it does not seem to press upon us now, it may have been superseded by something else—the family, for instance, and the workshop and the European federation, not forgetting our duties to the human race as a whole, which the ancients, as we are somewhat erroneously informed, hardly thought of. If citizenship actually plays so small part in life, as we say, why should we try and make it play a greater part? Perhaps "playing a greater part" is not the right way of describing what we want it to do for us. It is not, so to speak, one among other things, as we shall see directly. But the reason why we should recognise our position as citizens is, in short, that it alone includes all the other interests and associations, and makes them possible. The association to which we belong as citizens is the only one to which we ascribe the right of compulsion, *i.e.* the only one which we accept as having natural authority—that is, again, as fully representing our own greater self, or our whole conception of a common good. All the others are partial, and leave out whole provinces of our lives and whole masses of our fellow-countrymen, and the sign of this is that they are

voluntary, except in as far as the State delegates authority to them. Thus it is the State or civic community, in which alone society is focussed as a whole, that represents the connection and adjustment, the criticism, of all the other interests and relationships so as to form parts in a many-sided good life. Even our duty to humanity in general is chiefly possible through and by the community; it receives its form from our social ideas, and has to be adjusted to the demands of citizenship. Humanity does not exist as a whole in the same real way that the community does. It is true for us, as it was for the Greek, that the organised society which we recognise as sovereign is the field and sphere of good life for each of us.

Then how is this recognition to be worked out in our lives? Are we all to throw ourselves into municipal or imperial politics, to spend our days in reading up about Egypt and Uganda or Home Rule, in organising Liberal associations or yellow flowering leagues? Well, there must be politics, and some people must take part in them, and a healthy political interest is one mark of a good citizen. But, as I said, we do not rightly indicate the duties of citizenship by demanding that politics—that some separate concern to be called citizenship—should play a great part in our lives.

That is not the point. We must begin at the other end. Our aim is not to expand direct public or political action over our whole lives—that would narrow our lives, not widen them—but to understand our whole lives in the light of citizen ideas, in the light of a common good. This, as I said, is hard in the modern world. And the fact that it is hard is the reason why it is necessary.

The very solid and special interests and institutions of modern society, if misunderstood, are limits which confine and narrow each one of us, but, if rightly understood, are incomparably effective instruments of our good will. Take, for example, the family, as inherited by us from Roman law and interpreted by Christianity. It is much stronger, more exclusive, than the Greek family. No Greek citizen could be wholly absorbed in his domestic relations. The

position of women forbade it. They were not equal mates for men, and the true life of the Greek lay outside his home. An Englishman or Englishwoman to-day *may* be absorbed in the family. It is a real danger. What do we ask of them in the name of citizenship? To neglect their family for local or parliamentary politics? No. Just the reverse—that is, to deepen their family sentiment by remembering that the home is after all an element in the common good of the community; that the wife and children are not playthings, nor animals to be fed, nor instruments of social or industrial advancement, but are members of a great nation, that has a past and a future, and relations of duty and participation in a common good, binding together all its citizens. Thus the family will stand between its members and the community, not as a blank wall may stand between the eye and the sun, but as the half-way house may stand between the beginning and the goal of a journey. For thus our English homes will be nurseries of citizenship and the symbols of the social will, and become something more, not something less, than they are to-day. So too with the workshop, the neighbourhood, the Trades Union, the profession. It is not that people ought to jump out of the circumstances which put them in these conditions, but that, while remaining in some recognised groove, some accepted form of duty, they should bear in mind that their little life only has value as embodying some element of a common good. Therefore, while faithfully working in their groove, they must apply to it the best conception of human welfare that they can. They must *criticise* it, as we say in philosophy. Starting from this idea they will find improvements to make—simple little daily improvements. They will be pressed and coerced by moral necessity to this and that piece of work which their position and place brings to their hand, falling well within conditions which they are familiar with in practice, and which they will make it their duty to understand theoretically as much as they are able. How far they busy themselves with philanthropy or politics of any kind will be a question of aptitude and opportunity. They

will not be neglectful of local and municipal life, but yet will always attempt to confine themselves to what they understand, and to understand thoroughly whatever they touch. They will avoid the illusion that duties which deal with public matters are the only public duties. All duties are public, or at least take us beyond the ordinary self. Better probably than any philanthropy or politics is the work of a successful employer of labour who has a decently human relation to his employees.

But, no doubt, many people, especially women, have not what may be called natural duties to fill their lives. And also those who are engaged in a domestic or professional capacity may still have spare energy for public work, and are in many ways the best qualified of all. Now, in order to give some real detail to the sense of a common good, and to make it a genuine force, whether one is in an everyday groove or trying to do something of a public or philanthropic kind, every one should try to understand at least the outline of our system of local government, of our Poor Law in relation to character, and something of the history and conditions of industrial life. That comes across us in every station and vocation. The busiest professional people need such knowledge, because they are apt, out of hurry and good-nature, to interfere at random with other people's lives. The idle people need it terribly. The least they could do would be to cease from working mischief; and what a revolution that would make! We all spend money. We all employ labour. The least wealthy of us, as an aggregate, employ most. How we spend our money and what labour we employ determines nothing less than this: on what things the working people of this and other countries have to spend their lives, and under what conditions their lives are to be spent. If we will have nasty things, shoddy things, vulgar things, ugly things, we are condemning somebody to make them. If we will have impossibly cheap things, we are condemning somebody to work without proper pay. But I am beginning to trench on workshop training. General rules are dangerous, though principles ought to be thoroughly grasped.

For any kind of reform, the thing is to understand your particular business and the life of your district. All depends on how you go to work. I have been hearing about a northern town where it is alleged that bad sanitary conditions prevail. The philanthropic people seem to have got hysterical, and raised a public hue and cry, quoting some cases in quite exaggerated language. The health department has become exasperated. There is friction. They cannot get things put right. They do not seem—I speak at second-hand—to be able to find half a dozen simple-minded people who will inform themselves quite precisely of what nuisances exist in particular cases, and then report them quietly but persistently to the health department, adopting a friendly tone to the health officials; and yet I do not doubt there is the usual charitable crowd going to and fro in the city. If I am rightly informed, this seems like want of understanding. Of course, in social matters, you must keep your powder dry; it is always possible that you may have to fight—I mean, to enter upon public controversy. But, as a rule, accurate knowledge, perseverance, and gentleness, confining yourself closely to the matter in hand, and working out your principles rather than flourishing them, are the way to do business.

Then, in conclusion, the duties of citizenship will not necessarily drag us out of private life into politics, administration, or philanthropy, though it may well be that every one ought at least to be prepared to participate in such functions if occasion should arise. But they emphatically call upon us never to forget that every duty of life is ultimately a duty to develop the capacities of that human nature which finds its fundamental condition and expression in the many-sided whole of the organised community. They call upon us, therefore, whether or no we undertake what are known as public functions, at least to understand our life as something which concerns the neighbourhood and the nation in which it is spent. To "criticise" is to adjust a part to its due and harmonious relations with a whole. In this sense the conception of citizenship is a standard by which our life—whether in the family, in the urban

or rural neighbourhood, in trade or industry, in the Church, or in the work of charity—may be, and must be, criticised if it is to be in the full sense human. If we were bedridden our whole life long, it would still make a difference to others whether we spread around us a sensible and unselfish or a selfish and frivolous atmosphere. If we were scholars or astronomers, it would still concern our fellow-countrymen and the world that our work should be a type of sincerity, liberality, and devotion. But the issue at stake is more than this, and cannot be exhausted by one or two extreme illustrations. The shape and colour, so to speak, the spirit, tone, and energy of life, throughout and within every special sphere, will be altogether different according as we have or have not striven to understand its bearing, and the interlacing tissue of causation which makes us materially, as also spiritually, members one of another. And in such a criticism or adjustment we shall recover the unity of principle which, at first sight, may appear to have deserted the modern world.

II

THE DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP—*Continued*

By B. Bosanquet

Let us recall to begin with the conceptions suggested in the previous Lecture.

We examined, in the first place, the pure or simple case of citizenship, as it presented itself in the typical communities of ancient Greece. Here we observed that the path was plain, the interconnection of lives was obvious, the oneness of purpose and of spirit throughout the society of freemen was unmistakable. No subordinate "bodies," "interests," or "worlds," so strong as to be practically isolated, barred off the individual from the state. What for us is hard to discover, and perhaps impossible always to remember — the relation of our lives to a common good—was for him, in one form or another, impossible to forget.

In the second place, we cast a glance at the wilderness of "interests" which constitutes the intricate texture of modern society. We noted the difficulty of finding any clue to a unity between our surroundings, in which we are imprisoned from birth, and the life and well-being of our fellow-countrymen as a whole. "What is he?" we ask about any of our neighbours, wishing to ascertain the relation between his aims or interests and our own. The answer may be given by naming his rank, his industry, his profession, or, again, by naming any one of a hundred social, political, or religious movements, with which he has identi-

fied himself. And for distinction's sake, such a selection is necessary. But how confidently we draw the conclusion that we shall find him a prisoner within the limitations thus assigned, and that the adjustment of his isolated "world" to the national life has never really presented itself to him as a serious problem for study and for criticism? Is citizenship, we asked in effect, some department of affairs outside and narrowed down by all these ranks and interests and institutions, or does it rather permeate them all as the life-blood of the organism, and if it does, what does it demand of us, and where are we to find it as a reality?

And, in the third place, we returned to the idea of citizenship as a clue to the criticism or adjustment or unification of these separate "worlds" through a spirit which takes account of social purpose as a whole. Not for this,[1] we suggested, is society organised, that any single element should be wrapped up in its own purposes, and seek its fulfilment in isolation, but that, as an organism into which human nature unfolds itself, society throughout every subordinate function and institution should assert and maintain a harmonious principle of life. Therefore, we urged, in every sphere or institution we must find not a limit to our life, but an instrument of it; not a barrier, but a half-way house. The strength and specialisation of these subordinate worlds is a gain and not a loss, *if*, in deepening and enlarging some special organ of our consciousness—the family affections, for example, or the tradition of law, or the sense of religion, or the habit of discipline and chivalrous courage—they can be prevented from absolutely swallowing us up, or cutting us off from the many-sided social self—the community as sovereign in virtue of the general will—which is the condition and the expression of our human nature as an organised whole.

Before proceeding with the illustrations of this principle which were to occupy us to-day, I will say a word on the

[1] Plato, *Republic*, Book IV. 420 B: "Not with this view are we constructing our commonwealth, that any one body within it shall be supereminently prosperous."

supposed moral difficulty of the choice of our work, which arises as a moral problem when we find ourselves lost, as it were, in the wilderness of private and public relations and interests.

If, for example, we start from the conception that "my station and its duties" are the root of morality, the question may immediately be hurled at us, "But what *is* my station?" Even the Church Catechism, on this point usually misquoted, leaves our vocation to be determined by the course of life: "To do my duty in that state of life to which it *shall* please God to call me." In its full extent this difficulty can only exist for those who do not make their own living, or who, from exceptional ability or versatility, have an unusually free hand in selecting their vocation. Nor is it *necessarily* a social abuse that the majority have but a restricted choice of callings. As a matter of principle, true freedom consists in making the best of what we have—our parentage and our birthplace, for example, involving our whole initial outfit, both physical and moral, are unalterably given facts—rather than in an indefinite range of possible selection. Provision for adapting vocation to capacity is of course desirable, but in the end, whatever variety may be attainable, capacity must after all in a great degree adapt itself to vocation. But even those—the vast majority—whose lives are to a great extent externally determined, remain responsible for the spirit and temper of their work, and for the private duties on the one hand, and the public or semi-public on the other, which lie round its margin. A workman of my acquaintance, a painter by trade, has hardly an evening in the week free from the claims of working-class clubs and societies, in the management of which he, like so many of his fellows, displays a wonderful administrative energy and devotion. There is scope for choice in every life, and not merely in the life of the leisure class; but undoubtedly it is to the latter, and especially to women who have no need to support themselves, that the problem of selection presents itself like a pathless desert.

Now I am speaking not of the practical question of the

most appropriate choice, but only of the moral question raised by the *idea* of a conflict of duties, and the consequent perturbing impression that whatever you do, something must be neglected, and therefore every course must in some degree be wrong. And here I think that a simple distinction may really give relief. We are to distinguish between a true conflict of duties and a conflict of duty and selfishness. In the former, which we profess to constitute our difficulty, there is no cause for scruple or for remorse, although there may be a just and natural regret at our inability to undertake some branch of useful work. For a conflict of *duties* presupposes that the conflicting alternatives urge themselves *as duties only*, and so long as this is truly the case, our selfishness has no say in the matter, and we have no cause for moral anxiety and perturbation. It is as though I were entrusted with a sum of money with which to meet a variety of obligations, but insufficient to defray them all. The weighing of obligations against each other in order to determine which ought first to be discharged may be a nice and delicate task; but no ground arises for a case of conscience, unless I have reason to suspect that, in the perplexity of the situation, my own selfishness is taking occasion to influence me. It is undoubtedly possible that a man setting out to discharge two disagreeable duties may so deceive himself as to the difficulty of combining them, or of selecting the one in preference to the other, that he may return having achieved neither. Then is the just occasion for genuine remorse and the acutest self-contempt. But the moral emergency as such is adequately dealt with if we honestly bear in mind that only a duty can justify the avoidance of a duty. Then, if we are sincere, we have drawn the sting of self-accusation, and may confidently proceed to judge and to act according to our lights. I am inclined to think that for highly conscientious minds it is unwholesome to dwell on the customary idea that there is always one right course and one only. If we knew everything, this might be so; the one right course might then present itself as the one course possible. But in human life it is untrue

that there is only one right course open to us; it is truer to think that every course is right which, presenting itself as a genuine path of duty—though not the only one possible—is followed with the full force of our nature, and with the determination to make it effective to the common good. In preference to the maxim, "Search out the one right course before you choose," I should suggest as a deeper and a truer principle, "Begin anywhere, if you know of no plainer duty unfulfilled; but bear in mind that the course which you adopt can only justify itself if pursued as a duty; seriously, devotedly, and with eagerness to learn and criticise its bearing on the common good. The unpardonable sin is not in choosing the wrong duty, but in shirking all." Whatever clue you fasten upon will lead you to the centre, if followed whole-heartedly and with an open mind.

And now let us illustrate these principles from one or two branches of work or modes of life which may be interesting to the members of this settlement. In the first place, speaking generally, all women of the leisure class should especially study the probable effect of their working for pocket-money wages on their poorer rivals in the labour market. The question is a difficult one, but it seems plainly a cruel thing for ladies whose livelihood is secure to accept less than the market price for any kind of work in which they really compete with those who have their whole living to earn.

Passing from this general consideration, let us look at one or two examples of the evils which may arise if we fail to scrutinise our particular vocation with reference to the welfare of society, to modify our isolated "world" by the spirit of citizenship.

No one can value more than I do the work of those women who, being trained nurses, devote themselves to attendance on the poor at their own homes. Especially, perhaps, the indirect results of their exertions are of permanent social value. They bring light into dark places; they make known sanitary defects and cause them to be remedied; they educate those on whom they attend in the

management of a sickroom, and in numberless details of cleanliness and household economy.

But in one aspect of their vocation there is apt to occur a certain collision of duties which has long become a matter of friendly discussion and adjustment between some of their ablest workers and other persons engaged in a more general endeavour to improve the condition of the poor. A person who is ill needs food—often comparatively expensive food—and fire and houseroom, as well as nursing and medicine. Now let us suppose that a case on which a nurse is in attendance is one in which the family has not resources even to provide adequately for all its members, not to speak of diet for the sick. If the nature of the illness, and the general circumstances of the case, are such as to give reasonable hope that the family may by attention and perseverance be restored in the future to a self-supporting condition, then no objection will probably be made by persons interested in sound charitable work against finding some friends to provide the nourishment required, and to do what is necessary for the whole family with a view to ultimate re-establishment on a self-supporting basis. But if all the circumstances point in an opposite direction, if the condition of the family appears hopeless, if character is bad, if the illness has been caused or seriously aggravated by drink, if the absence of work is not due to sickness, but the sickness is a mere incident in a life of continued unemployment, so that its cure is no remedy for the evil, then it will be held advisable in the interest of society, and indeed of the family itself, especially if it includes young children, that the case should be dealt with by the Poor Law, the patient should be received into the infirmary, and the children, instead of dragging on in semi-starvation, should make a fresh start in the Poor Law schools. But recourse to the Poor Law is voluntary, and is shunned by the worse among the poor because of the loss of freedom and submission to rules which life in an institution demands, as by the more independent, owing to the confession of failure implied in an appeal for public relief. It is therefore probable that

for mixed reasons, by no means necessarily discreditable, the sick person or the family will display the greatest repugnance to appeal to the Poor Law, especially if outdoor relief is not likely to be granted, which would not be done in the case described under any moderate relief policy. The nurse is then, no doubt, in a dilemma. Her duty, she will say—and who can deny it?—is to bring the patient through his sickness. Obviously it is idle for her to give attendance and medicine to a sick person who has insufficient nourishment, and perhaps inadequate house-room, and a difficulty in providing fire. If, therefore, the case is rejected by those with whom she commonly works on the ground that no permanent good can be done to the family, while by assisting it much harm will be caused perhaps to the children themselves and certainly to the *morale* of the neighbourhood, then she is of course very strongly tempted to assist the case out of her own resources or by appealing to other private friends, whose aid is given entirely because of her request. And, in fact, she cannot possibly do otherwise unless she is prepared to refuse further attendance, or unless an arrangement exists by which she can attend as the agent of the Poor Law authorities—a case which we are not at present discussing.

But now let us look at the matter from the point of view of those who have banded themselves together to improve the condition of the poor in a certain district by a definite and intelligent policy in the administration of charitable relief. Their aim and desire is to bring to bear the resources of their neighbourhood effectively and thoroughly where substantial good can be achieved by strengthening and supporting those sufferers whom it appears reasonably possible to restore to independent life; but, for a thousand reasons, to discountenance the scattering of relief among hopeless cases in which no permanent good can be done to the sufferer, for whom institutional treatment is as a rule far more adequate, while infinite harm is caused by the precedent and example of lavish help to the characterless or incompetent held up before a whole street or district. To these charitable

workers the action of the nurse in the case supposed cannot but seem to be in frustration of their whole policy; and they feel it all the harder, because to whatever extent they habitually labour to assist her with cases which in their judgment demand assistance, precisely to that extent they are made to stultify themselves through the course adopted by her in perfect good faith with regard to "unhelpable" cases. For it is plain that the amount of assistance procured by their means for those cases, brought to their knowledge by the nurse, which are suitable to be completely and continuously relieved, is the amount to which it may be supposed the private resources of the nurse and her immediate friends are set free to help those who in the judgment of the experts ought not to be relieved by charity. "Had we never helped at all," such workers must feel, "then presumably the resources which are now taxed to help these hopeless cases would by preference have been drawn upon to benefit those in which assistance can do real good; so that our endeavours to aid, though themselves strictly limited to cases which we approve of, have the direct result of setting free a large amount of charitable relief for the cases which, in our judgment, could be for every reason better dealt with by the Poor Law." And thus they cannot but see that their co-operation for good is so far converted into co-operation for harm. It may be mentioned in passing that throughout the charitable world, in so far as organisation is imperfect, the same radical difficulty prevails, a curious symptom of the indissoluble connection of lives within the social tissue. In as far as fresh financial resources are called into play by those who strain every nerve thoroughly to remedy all remediable causes of distress, there is no doubt that the resources previously and on the average devoted to relief work are set free to be more and more widely expended by methods which can do nothing but mischief.[1] The terrible pro-

[1] Almost all old-fashioned charitable societies, including too often the clergy and the District Visiting Societies, avowedly send all "good" and "heavy" cases to the Charity Organisation Society, thus retaining their own funds to be expended in the less costly "doles."

blems and wide-reaching responsibilities which arise from this state of things can readily be inferred.

The importance of a thorough insight and of breaking down the barriers of traditional routine by help of the citizen spirit could not be more strikingly illustrated. Except in so far as we can break down this moral and intellectual isolation, the extension of wise methods in the charitable world appears to involve a corresponding extension of foolish ones.

But returning to the example of the nurses, what is it that we ask them to do? Their position, as I have said, is difficult. It cannot be expected, I have often heard the most experienced charitable workers say, that a nurse should maintain the point of view which commends itself to those who are dealing with the problem of poverty as a whole. And I do not wish to dogmatise. It seems clear indeed that if the nurse universally gives way to the threat of the patient, "You may abandon the case, but I will not apply to the Poor Law,"[1] all possibility of distinguishing between hopeful and hopeless cases is radically cut away, and owing to the fact that the needs of sickness presuppose the needs of life, and that a patient can hardly be kept in comfort with a starving family beside him, it would become necessary to maintain by charity for long periods the most improvident and characterless families, many of whose members would thus be confirmed in idle and vicious habits. In various degrees the rule, I believe, is already adopted that when the medical attendant recommends the Poor Law infirmary, and the patient refuses, the nurse should abandon the case. But it is not for me to lay down rules on practical points of workshop training. What can do nothing but good is that a lady, who is exercising such a vocation,

[1] It should be borne in mind that the Poor Law authorities are absolutely responsible for the relief of destitution when application has been made to them; and that, therefore, if a patient who applies to them is too ill to be moved to the infirmary, they must attend to him to the best of their power in his own home. It is therefore possible for the voluntary nurse to abandon any case which is not fit for charitable assistance, care being taken if extreme need exists to notify the Poor Law authorities.

should have learned or should learn to appreciate the bearing of her work, not only on the immediate sufferer (and that in the largest sense, including his future and that of the other members of the family), but also on progress or retrogression in the whole condition of the poor, and consequently in the welfare and good life of society as a whole. Then, in the particular case, her trained wisdom will suggest to her what measures to adopt, and she will be an educating influence not only as regards the conditions of health, but as regards those of character.

Analogous conclusions are obviously applicable to the work of the district visitor, and above all, to that of the minister of religion. It appears almost inconceivable, when we remember that every minister with a cure of souls is practically the head of a powerful relief society, that candidates for orders should pass through no systematic training on a subject in which more than in any other naïve impressions are revolutionised by education, and the treatment of which is all but decisive for moral and material good and evil in the lives of large sections of the poor.

Let us apply our conceptions for a moment in conclusion to that which has brought us together here to-day —the social settlement movement.

I take it that the natural basis of the settlement idea is to be found in that which Edward Denison had in view when he took up his residence in the East End of London. The notion was simply, I presume, that persons with some degree of leisure and education should become residents in districts where such residents are rare, and thus do something to destroy the isolation of classes, and supply a force of volunteers well qualified to lead in the more public kind of civic duties. The change of residence was thus intended simply to overcome the physical difficulty of remoteness, and not to imply any radical change in mode of life, nor necessarily, an exceptional self-consecration or self-devotion incompatible with the pursuit of a profession or the life of a man of the world. Many men of com-

paratively leisure class do live in the East End to-day apart from any settlement, and then take up what work comes to their hand, as they would if they lived in the West End. The late Canon Bradby was a notable example. He lived with his wife and family in the St. Katharine's Dock House, and worked at his several occupations, and mingled with his neighbours as he would have done in any other vicinity. And this appears to me to be a very healthy and sound type of life. It remains practical and ordinary. The natural points of contact between a lodger or householder and servants, shopkeepers, workmen, and other neighbours are not minimised. There is no risk of waste; no collegiate buildings; if you die or are compelled to leave, the house is there, like other houses in the same district, only perhaps in better sanitary condition, and it is useful for any inhabitant.

But as the powerful modern spirit of association has seized upon this movement, its nature has been unconsciously transformed. This forced itself upon my observation especially in the United States of America, and is becoming more and more noticeable in London. It is a special form of associated enterprise, a movement in which the collegiate, if not monastic or conventual aspect, is becoming exceedingly prominent. The subject is a very large one, and the few observations which I can make must not be taken as a complete estimate of the movement, which would however be well worth attempting. If we look at the addresses of able and experienced settlement workers in the United States, we see that beyond a question the movement is regarded as a good in itself and as eliciting a new type of self-consecration and self-devotion.[1] Now the idea of methodic training and study, under skilled direction, with reference to social work and social problems, as a preparation for the duties of the clergyman or district visitor, or indeed for those of ordinary home life in any neighbourhood, and especially

[1] *Philanthropy and Social Progress* New York, Crowell and Company. Miss Addams (head of Chicago Settlement), pp. 6, 49. Mr. Woods (head of Boston Settlement), p. 95.

for the theoretical study of social phenomena, appears to be a most desirable application and development of the principle of association. But this is an ideal which is not realised without resolution, experience, and wisdom. Bad method grows up of itself, especially under the artificial conditions of a settlement, if no special provision is made for skilled instruction and criticism. I confess to a certain feeling of terror, when I think of the increasing number of centres where groups of inexperienced young men or young women have come together, burning "to do good," and, so far as I am aware, without any special provision for acquainting themselves with the conditions of their task. Rumours which come to my ears both from the United States and from parts of London justify some disquietude. In this settlement, indeed, I know how skilfully and resolutely a curriculum of practice and theory is planned and executed. I believe that conferences occasionally take place at least among the women's settlements. Could not this question of a definite training for workers be brought up at such a conference, the practice of different settlements be compared, and some attempt be made to arrive at a clearness as to the methods and objects of settlement work?

I am jealous—I frankly admit it—of any movement which appears to disparage by comparison the life of the citizen who lives at home and works among his neighbours. This, and not the other, appears to me to be the ideal. For systematic training of workers the settlement is good, and also, perhaps, to supply a centre of residence in districts where the leisure class are few. I should further distinguish the special value of settlements which provide the buildings and other facilities essential to university extension work and similar undertakings. Halls and public rooms are hard to come by in London, and the provision of them in certain proportions for educational purposes may be taken as supplying a definite need in a poor district. Thus, from all that I can hear, I cordially welcome the work of Toynbee Hall as a poor man's university.

But apart from these special needs and functions, I do not believe that a monastic or conventual movement is to-day a movement towards a higher life. The higher life lies in the opposite direction—in the home, the family, the commonplace neighbourly acquaintance. It occurs to me forcibly that within the walls of a large settlement the young men or young women must have actually less habitual contact with poorer neighbours, of an unconstrained and spontaneous kind, than where each has his or her own centre of richer and poorer acquaintances and dependents. Is not, for example, the marketing done for a collegiate settlement, and the repairs seen to, on a large scale, by some steward or housekeeper, so that the little daily courtesies and reciprocal interests which establish themselves in ordinary household life between us and our tradespeople, and their workmen, must in a great degree be abolished? One who has lived for many years in a college would be apt to reflect that a more inhuman form of existence could hardly be conceived.

These suggestions, I repeat, are not aimed against settlements, of which I recognise the value, but against the glorification of the settlement life as one specially set apart for the service of man. Here as throughout we must demand that the specialisation which is an indispensable feature of modern life shall not isolate us from the citizen spirit, the pulse-beat of the social heart. We shall feel with Browning—

> If we have souls, know how to see and use,
> One place performs like any other place
> The proper service every place on earth
> Was framed to furnish man with; serve alike
> To give him note that, through the place he sees,
> A place is signified he never saw,
> But, if he lack not soul, may learn to know.

I have deliberately abstained from trying to map out the different provinces of citizen duty. I am sure that any one who with good heart sets himself or herself to understand a neighbourhood with its local life, or the family, or a trade, or profession, as an element in the

welfare of the community, will do so more vitally for not having a tabular form to start from. The point is to gain such an insight as may make our particular place transparent to us, and may make it a symbol which we understand more thoroughly itself because we see how it affects the welfare of our whole organised society. To do this, there is no cast-iron formula that will help us. Whenever we have grasped a clue, either an interest or a difficulty, we must follow it up into the best thought and experience of the day, and if possible become practically acquainted with the facts that bear on it.

Of course such a settlement as this considered as a "training school" is an immense facility for learning at least how much there is to learn. On every charity organisation committee, again, we shall find interests that ramify in all directions, into educational and industrial problems, into local government, very likely into national art and its true conditions.

Do not suppose that at first we can see things as they are. For this—to know and feel things as they are—is the goal of all science and practice, and the goal is at the end. It is always true that to grasp things as they are—that is, in their spirit and movement—we must grasp them in their connection as a whole, and the duties of citizenship form no exception to the rule.

III

THE CHILDREN OF WORKING LONDON

By H. Dendy

One of the most serious social problems of the day is that presented by the rapid increase of large towns, more especially of London; and there is a tendency to regard this increase as wholly undesirable, and to some extent unnatural. When we are told that the population of London increases every year by 50,000, or in more picturesque and sensational language, that a fair sized town is added annually to the metropolis, a lively imagination conjures up the picture of an army of able-bodied men and women trooping up from the country-side or from abroad, to compete with the unfortunate Londoner. We are a little apt, I think, to lose sight of the fact that by far the greater part of this annual increase consists of little Londoners who have at least as good a right as their parents to their heritage—such as it is—of bricks and mortar, and whose so-called "competition for labour" cannot but be regarded as natural and desirable. Dr. Longstaff, in his *Studies in Statistics*, estimates the extent to which Greater London grows on the one hand by "natural increase," on the other by the "balance of migration," and the ratio is as 7½ to 4,—that is to say, nearly two-thirds of the annual increase consists of London-born children. This being so, it is evident that only a comparatively small part of the problem is touched by any considerations as to the restriction of immigration from the country. A far more

serious question presents itself in the infantine army, which is advancing upon us in what remains of this century, and in the physical and mental condition of its members. We are told, for instance, that new hospitals will be needed for at least 6000, many of whom will be permanently crippled; institutions for nearly 1000 blind and deaf and dumb; prisons for 7000 criminals; and workhouses for 48,000 paupers; while of those who remain to take the field many will be feeble-minded and most feeble-bodied.

From considerations such as these the question which forces itself perhaps most frequently upon those who live in working London is this: Is it possible for children to grow up healthy and strong—mentally and physically—in large towns, or is it as inevitable as it is true that the race degenerates with town life until the third generation dies out from mere want of vitality? It is with this question before us that I propose to examine some of the conditions of child-life as they actually exist, and to consider how far they admit of actual improvement.

The most obvious and easily grasped of these conditions is, of course, school; but important as its influence is, this must still remain a mere incident in life as compared with the home. The child learns his manners and refinements at school; his habits and character are those of his home.

Home-life in working London is difficult to see. Sometimes one almost doubts whether there is anything beyond the busy passing up and down the streets, the hasty meal snatched between intervals of school or work, and for the mother the weary alternation between wash-tub and scrubbing-brush. But this is the impression of the outsider who confines his investigations to the main thoroughfares, or makes official visits during the business hours of the business day. One way for such a one to get a glimpse of the real life behind is by a study of back-gardens, such as are fortunately still to be found in many parts of London. Here human nature displays itself naturally and off its guard. Although the gardens (yards would be a better

name) are necessarily surrounded by houses, each with its six or eight windows pointed directly upon them, yet there is a sort of tacit understanding by virtue of which family life goes on as freely and easily as in the most perfect seclusion. There is not necessarily any ignoring of what takes place, but it is understood that you are beyond the sphere of criticism, and may plant sunflowers, and shoot sparrows, and practise boxing on a Sunday without any one having the right to "pass remarks."

I am fortunate in commanding the survey of some five or six of these gardens—sooty, dingy strips they are, but capable of affording an immense variety of interest to the owners and their neighbours. In four of these there are families of children who lend themselves fairly well as specimens of different types. No. 1 is the highest in the scale; it consists of four or five little boys, so like each other that the number is uncertain; they are as sturdy, well-cared-for little fellows as one would wish to see. The father is a policeman, with an interest in animal, as well as human nature, and his strip of garden is quite full of natural history. Every spring a brood of young ducklings appears, and as they gradually leave the scene they are replaced by pigeons; about a third of the ground is devoted to a permanent staff of cocks and hens, just beyond the reach of a dog whose chain allows him to command another considerable portion of the estate. I believe, but am not sure, that the lean-to at the end contains rabbits or guinea-pigs or some such small deer, and the daily process of tending and feeding this little kingdom is gone through with the greatest regularity and care by father and sons in company. Covered up in quaint little blouses which are discarded outside the front door, these little fellows have all the appearance, and many of the interests of country children, and in watching their merry natural life one feels encouraged to hope that in judicious hands many of the evils of the town may be averted.

Family No. 2 consists entirely of girls, aged from four to fourteen; it is distinctly lower in the scale of comfort than No. 1, although the mothers are on speaking

terms and confide the histories of their children's accidents and ailments over the low dividing wall. There is a want of the phlegmatic calm which distinguishes the policeman (I believe he is a Scotchman), and gives a tone of well-being to his family; the mother is worn and anxious-looking, the father is said to be going up in the world, but he drinks heavily, and since falling off the top of an omnibus, is wont to come home in a hansom. Discipline is enforced by loud commands and hasty slaps; the children are oftener in the streets than are their little neighbours; and the eldest girl has already caught something of the noisy laugh and reckless romping ways which are so characteristic of London girls. But there is still much that is natural and healthy about the life of this family; they have proper children's games in their garden, dolls' tea-parties, shops, and all the wholesome make-believe of child-life, and last autumn, after the delicate one had been ill, the whole batch was seen crowding into a cab on their way to a fortnight at the seaside.

No. 3 represents the pitiful class of invalid children. Until a few months ago she was the brightest little mite in London, brimful of life and merriment and spirits. Such children, when well cared for, seem to concentrate into their few short years of health the energy and vivacity of a lifetime. They are prematurely quick-witted, inexhaustible in spirits, with the keenest interest in all that goes on around them, and, until stricken down by illness, the light and life of the home. But they are children of the third generation, their parents die young of consumption, and if they do not succumb to the ailments incident to childhood, they emerge from them crippled and maimed for life.

No. 3 has been brought up on exclusive principles; a little guarded intercourse is permitted with the girls of No. 2, but with family No. 4 she is not allowed to "associate" at all, and if found exchanging childish confidences on the subject of cats or dolls over the wall, is hustled away to the seclusion of the back-kitchen. For the children of No. 4 are very low down in the scale;

they are not householders but occupy a back attic, and it is only on sufferance that the little brother and sister are allowed in the garden at all. To them it is a place of punishment rather than of recreation; they are banished thither, or into the street, whenever washing-day or other family catastrophes render their presence in the little room undesirable. They are ugly, half-starved, cross little things, whose only idea of play is to drop something over the wall for the sake of having it handed back, unaccompanied by a blow or a harsh word. Their future is easily read; in a few years time the girl's poor, plain little face will be hidden under the big hat and drooping feathers of the factory hand, and the boy will be running wild in the streets, qualifying for reformatory or prison. And yet their life might be almost as good as that of No. 1; they live in exactly the same surroundings, and might go to the same school; it is only a wholesome home atmosphere which is wanting.

It was first suggested to me by watching family No. 1 that one of the greatest drawbacks of a town education is its remoteness from Nature. I am not referring now so much to the truism that it is desirable for children to have plenty of fresh air and country food, as to the effect upon mental and moral development of being born and bred in a town. Perhaps we can hardly realise what a narrowness of view this means for our little Londoners. For them the normal condition of a plant is to be in a pot, of a bird to be in a cage, of any animal but a horse or dog to be hanging up an ugly corpse in a butcher's shop. And it is not only that in this way they see Nature as something poor and ugly; they cannot see it in any other aspect than as subservient to human wants. There is no possibility of that disinterested outlook upon the world which is the root of all higher life. The country boy goes birds'-nesting, and catches animals, and turns all things to his own profit and amusement; but not even his egotism can fail to see that Nature has a meaning which is quite indifferent to his interests, and so presently he develops into the artist or man of science. If the town boy has any liking for live things

he haunts the bird-fanciers' shops, and all which that leads to is pigeon-shooting and rat-catching.

Disinterested interest—that must be the keynote of all healthy life, and it is so difficult to get for children in a town life, where everything they see is framed and fashioned unmistakably for man alone. In the country human nature sinks to its proper insignificance, and preserves its true proportions; in the town its importance is exaggerated out of all proportion, and it becomes the grotesque and even hideous caricature which seems to develop inevitably under the influences of town life, and which is rarely found in the country.

This, then, should be one of the points to aim at in the education of town children; to get them back to a proper reverence for Nature—reverence for the lower as well as for the higher forms of life, for degradation of the former is always followed by degradation of the latter. Much can be done in this way by means of books, museums, and public gardens; but all these are tainted by the same leaven of artificiality, and subordination to the little uses of mankind. Perhaps the biggest step in the right direction has been taken by the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and if it would last just long enough to establish a habit, and then die quietly out before it has established a claim, it might figure in social history as the initiator of a great social reformation.

Where there is a true home life this difficulty may be to a large extent got over, and a good home influence may partly compensate for the moral training which only country life can fully give. How far the London school life works in the right direction it is difficult to say; for the lowest class of children its value is quite inestimable; but this value consists less in the actual information imparted than in the discipline and order which is enforced. But when the children are of a better class, getting their moral education at home, and looking to school for their mental development, the question takes a rather different shape. If one could look upon the code as final, and upon education as a given quantity accurately contained within its limits, then our Board Schools would be almost perfect in this

way. Even as it is, the results which they achieve are really wonderful, and justify the expectation of great things when the material upon which we have to work is better understood. Take, for instance, the vexed question of technical training. There is in our school-children an immense amount of aptitude simply running to waste for want of proper development. These are children of generations of woodcarvers, weavers, flower-makers, and engravers who have inherited a fineness of touch which none of the present training given in a Board School can improve. They are splendid material for real teaching, and only need to have their eyes opened to true art to turn out first-rate work; but then we must have artists, or at least some one who knows what art is, to teach them. It is the same with musical talent; here, again, the material is excellent; their voices are good, and they are far more apt to understand and learn than children of the same age and social rank in the country.

The point which I want to bring out about these better-class children—the children of the artisan—is, that so far as concerns them, we are reversing the process of using a razor to chop wood with; we are trying to fashion very delicate and valuable material with very clumsy tools, and there is a great future for the upper working classes when they have learned how to develop properly the intellectual capacities of their children.

How does it stand with these children as regards their chances of health and physical development? They have many difficulties to contend with in a town. Much stress is often laid upon the dangers they are exposed to in coming into close contact with the lowest class of children in the schools. So far as they do actually come into contact with them, this is a serious matter, and makes one feel inclined to wonder at the almost complete extinction of private schools. But the explanation may be found in the natural classification which goes on amongst the schools of a neighbourhood, and which is perfectly well recognised by both teachers and parents. Of the three schools which I know best, and which lie almost within a stone's throw

of each other, the first contains hardly any but picked children—the best of the artisan class; the second has children of a much rougher description, but still fairly respectable; while the third is called by its teachers the "sink of Hoxton." The neighbourhood is to all intents and purposes the same, but the one which was built last, and with all the newest improvements, has got a good name. There are always far more applications than can be entertained. The teachers are able to choose, and they naturally select those who will keep up the good name of the school. In this way the risks to the better children are reduced to a minimum, and are perhaps hardly greater than those incurred by West End children in passing through the streets.

A far more serious matter is the overcrowding which seems to be almost inevitable in a town life. In the day-time this is of comparatively small importance, though even then the effect on character of never being alone is very bad; but the miserably inadequate sleeping accommodation, which is quite invariable amongst working people in London, must be highly injurious to children. Four or five in a bed is a common distribution, and I have known them overflow into the box-mangle, which was considered by the mother to be quite sufficient for two. When we add to this that the same room is used by night and day without a thought of ventilation, we cannot doubt that the seeds of much and serious illness are to be found in this overcrowding of growing children. Nor is the question of ventilation quite such a simple one as it appears to the educationally inclined visitor who demonstrates to the mother the ease of opening a window. Very often the houses are so constructed that what comes in at the window is worse than what goes out. Moreover, those who have lived in the poorer districts have learned that if they are going to keep their windows opened at night, they must be prepared for very unpleasant interruptions to their rest.

Another way in which this overcrowding acts is in the late hours which it encourages, if it does not actually cause

them. Half, at least, of the children cannot go to bed until the sitting-room is done with; they must keep their parents' hours, and few of them finish their day before ten or even eleven o'clock.

Then, again, the excitement of a town life tells very greatly upon children; if you look closely you will see that London children are always tired; the dark rings under their eyes tell of the nervous strain which is breaking down their health, and their very restlessness is the restlessness of fatigue and nervous exhaustion. They begin to share the life of their parents so early that they often seem to have no real childhood. This is especially the case with the first children of a family. The working people of London are a pleasure-loving race, and in their youth, at any rate, their evening engagements are hardly fewer than those of the West End; the young men and women meet at the theatre, the music hall, often at private parties; they become acquainted in the course of social life, and when they marry they keep up the same constant round of evening recreations. Then comes the time when the young wife has to choose between child and husband; it is a moral dilemma which hardly occurs in higher ranks. To stay at home with the child is to lose one of her strongest holds upon her husband—is to cease to share his leisure with him; to leave the child alone seems impossible. And yet it would probably be safer than the course almost invariably pursued—that of taking the child and exposing it to all the risks of sudden changes of temperature, of crowded rooms, and of the cold night air. "Why do so many Shoreditch babies die of bronchitis?" I asked a shrewd woman. "It's going out at night in all weathers," she said promptly; "then, when the parents get home, they are not going to take the trouble to light a fire at that time of night, and the baby is undressed in the cold and put into cold night-clothes and a cold bed; of course they die." Not long ago I counted between thirty and forty infants-in-arms at the Britannia Theatre, and there cannot have been fewer than a hundred present. The later ones fare better; not only is it easier to leave two or three at home

together, but with increasing years and responsibilities the appetite for pleasure-going diminishes; the father's habits are settled for good or for bad, and the mother is more content to bide at home. On the other hand, with the increase of the family, there creeps in the system of sub-contracting, which is as liable to abuse in family life as in industry. The mother hands over the baby to the elder children, the elder children to the younger, until three-year-old is left tumbling about the streets in charge of one-year-old, and no one ever knows the narrow escapes and actual mishaps which they undergo.

Another great difficulty against which these children have to contend is their unsuitable diet. Here, again, their needs have to conform to the taste of the parents, and often with disastrous results. In a town, the wholesome, if monotonous, diet of the country is replaced by an immense variety of cheap and "tasty" food, and even the baby has a morsel of everything which is going. "It can eat anything," said a proud woman to me, exhibiting a flabby infant, and the "anything" probably included an assortment upon which most of us would hesitate to venture. The "drink question" also assumes, perhaps, its chief importance with reference to children who drink tea almost as soon as milk, and acquire a taste for alcoholic liquors before they can speak plainly.

It is worth noticing that in poorer districts the dampness of dwelling-houses is emphasised by medical officers as a fertile cause of illness amongst children. Indeed, all the causes which tend to raise the death-rate in poorer London are far more fatal to children than to their elders. Taking the percentage of deaths under five years of age to total deaths in the same district, I find that in five of the worst districts it varies from 44 to 49 per cent, while over all London it is only 36. Camberwell is most instructive in showing how terribly child-life is a prey to circumstance. Taken as a whole district, the rate of deaths under five years is 44 per cent of the whole number; but it is divided into four subdistricts. In Dulwich the proportion is only 19 per cent, in Camberwell proper it is

36 per cent, in Peckham 40 per cent, and in St. George's 49 per cent.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the number of those who succumb to these evils is of less importance than the condition of those who survive. All are subject to the same mischievous influences, and those who struggle through bear the marks for life, if not in actual disease, at any rate in impaired vitality. And yet the remedies are so simple; more stringent enforcement of existing sanitary regulations, stricter supervision against overcrowding, and, most important of all, better training of boys and girls for the responsibilities awaiting them: little more than this is needed to make a healthy life for children as possible in poor London as in rich.

This brings me naturally to my third class of children — the invalids. These children, as I have said, are generally in the third generation of London life. But to say this alone is at once too much and too little; it implies a cumulative and inevitable evil in which I do not believe, and the fatalism of the observation seems to yield a little before analysis. Take the child I have already mentioned as No. 3; she is suffering from hip-disease, and will probably never get rid of the complaint in one form or another. A superficial inquiry seems to strengthen the theory of heredity; her father died of consumption, a large family on the mother's side have died of consumption, and the mother herself is delicate. But let us go a little deeper into the family history. On the father's side the grandfather is a native of Islington, a bootmaker by trade, a clever workman, kind-hearted, easy-going, and thriftless, with a wife of distinctly commoner nature. They have a large family of wild, reckless young people, all of them steady so far that, though extravagant, they do not run into excess, but spoiled on the one hand by the mother's quarrelsome temper, on the other by the father's carelessness. Their home is a scene of constant irritation and excitement; they most of them work at their father's trade, and arrange their life so as to work night and day for half the week and play the other half. One of the sisters died

in a lunatic asylum, literally driven mad by the home quarrellings. The others are all living and in good health except the father of No. 3, whose illness was caused by working in poisoned air, and was probably in no way inherited.

On the mother's side both grandparents were country people. The grandfather was hopelessly invalided while comparatively young, and the whole burden of a large little family fell upon his wife. She went out to work, leaving a tribe of babies in charge of the eldest boy, and the mother of No. 3 went to work at the age of twelve, and never ceased until she met her future husband at an evening party. Three years afterwards he broke down, and with two babies the wife had to turn to work again, taking the smallest one with her, to lie about on stone floors and be almost utterly neglected, because she feared to lose the work that was bread to all of them. The other child was adopted by the father's family, and is now as healthy as late hours and unwholesome diet will permit; but the other was tossed from pillar to post while the mother alternately worked and nursed her dying husband. It is, of course, perfectly natural that she should now be suffering from early neglect, but there is nothing in all this which is the inevitable result of town life. If the father's early life had been in better hands, if the sanitary inspector had done his duty by the shop in which he worked, if friends had come to the rescue of No. 3 as they did for her sister —so many "ifs" might have saved this child that it is impossible to regard its fate as inevitable.

I believe the same to be true of thousands of the little invalids who are now looked upon as the necessary victims of town life. They owe their lot to nothing so impressive as an inherited doom, but to a very commonplace carelessness and stupid selfishness on the part of the family and community into which they are born.

One most difficult part of the problem remains. What is to become of the lowest class of children—the children who come of degraded homes and degraded parents—the children who herd together in schools of the worst fame, and streets of the worst reputation? The class is too

large a one to be ignored, though it may easily be overlooked if you keep to the highways. Like rats and mice and blackbeetles these little outcasts shun the open ways, and have their own haunts where they are seldom trespassed upon by the outside world. The responsible members of the family, the fathers and grown-up sons, are generally on guard at the public-house at the corner, waiting patiently for an acquaintance to turn up and stand them a glass, or beguiling the hours with a stray number of *Tit-Bits*. Down a side street and into a little court off it you will find the wives and families at home. It is a peculiarity of these places that the house doors always stand hospitably open, inviting attention to a confusion of chaotic dirt within, and letting out into the street an indescribable odour which at once betrays the class of inhabitant. Every doorway is occupied by a more or less sturdy woman who, with her sleeves rolled up ready for the work which she never does, is comfortably nursing her red elbows until the costermonger, who is yelling at the top of the street, shall make his way down to her. Then she will buy from him some half-rotten fish or decayed fruit and vegetables at the price charged for wholesome food in the open road. Swarming up and down the doorsteps, or camping out in the roadway, are countless numbers of puny, dirty children—a striking contrast to the stout, red-faced women who look on. They live in the roadway; it is quite safe from accidents, for there is no traffic; nobody thinks of passing through, and few people beside the rent-collector have any business in the place itself; and wet or dry, hot or cold, the children swarm up and down, eat and drink, play and even sleep, from each morning to late at night. They can hardly be said to be clothed; they are tied up in old rags, and garments of the most incongruous description are hung on to them with the utmost disregard of the age or shape of the wearer. These are the children who are found in the lowest class school, and there they get the only training or education of any kind which they will ever have. They are always unwashed,—at home because washing does not come within the scope of family life; at school because the risk is too great until

it is possible to have a separate apparatus for each child. They are generally sucking sweets of some description, and they are nearly always one behind with their meals. It is quite true that many of them come to school without having breakfasted, and this is because their parents interpret too literally the maxim of "sufficient unto the day." They empty their cupboard each day, and have to earn a breakfast before they can eat it; and though the children are always late for school, the household is seldom sufficiently advanced in its operations to feed the children before turning them out. Moreover, experience has taught them that the child who goes fasting to school generally brings home at night a little ticket which enables his father to postpone the problem of next day a little longer.

I must repeat here that the actual instruction which it is possible to drill into these children is absolutely unimportant in comparison with the habits of order and obedience which they are learning. It is their one chance of civilisation. From the age of three to twelve or thirteen they are in good hands, and it is before and after this period that they stand most in need of help. The critical moment of their lives is when they leave school, and in saying this I refer especially to boys. They are then bright, quick, and fond of making themselves useful; if they could be got straight to work we should find ourselves in twenty years' time almost without a residuum. But their mothers like them at home to help with the children; their fathers to have them at their heels ready to run errands. If they are put to work at once it is only to a little errand-boy's place, which they lose as soon as they begin to grow lanky. This is true, I am sorry to say, of even the better-class parents, and many a lad is spoiled for life in the interval between school and work. Six months of the idle, undisciplined street life is more than enough to undo all previous training, and it is extraordinary how a course of lounging outside public-houses will change these lads. When they leave school they are bright and responsive; as cheeky as you like, but quite frankly so, and without any malice about them. They are ready to do anything, and

full of pluck and vitality. But after a year's idleness you can do nothing with them; they will be sulkily stupid when you talk to them, and are as likely as not to throw stones as soon as your back is turned. Any excuse is good enough for refusing work, and the chances are all in favour of confirmed loafing. There is a grand opening for the enterprising school manager who will take one of these schools in hand, catch the boys as they leave, and use all his influence to persuade the parents to put them in a good way of work. It would not be a very difficult task, and the effects would be quite incalculable.

Are London children happy? I think there can be little doubt in answering in the affirmative. Some very fruitful sources of childish misery there are. Illness, of course, is one, and perhaps not less potent the chronic sickliness due to the continual consumption of bad sweets. Drunkenness is another, though this is by no means invariably combined with cruelty, or even unkindness, to children. Even when it is, the genuine slum child has many means of withdrawing himself from notice until the danger is over. On the other hand, the delights of the street are many and great; the daily path to school yields a succession of stolen joys which make it compare very favourably in point of true pleasure with the formal promenade of the little West-ender in fashionable clothes and clean hands. The interests of a wet day are even greater than when it is fine, and the stock plea that the children have got no boots seems to diminish in importance as one sees the deliberate way in which they wade up the gutter, and seek out every puddle to paddle in, utterly regardless of good boots, or bad boots, or no boots at all.

To children of fourteen and fifteen the streets have a perilous fascination in the evening. The glare of the gas-lamps, the busy thronging to and fro, the wild, free intercourse among acquaintances and strangers alike, are irresistible attractions to these excitable young creatures after the monotony of the day. I have seen a letter from a girl of this age describing the delights of the street dance and the meeting of friends, which, though perfectly simple

in expression, was almost passionate in its intensity of feeling, and made me realise more than many failures the impossibility of getting these young girls out of London or into a quiet domestic life. If they are plain or awkward or low-spirited, or in any way unable to hold their own in the boisterous merrymaking, you may succeed; or if you can get hold of them before they have fairly broken away from the restraints of school. But not unless. There is a passion for excitement in all of us which must be satisfied when once it has got the upper hand, and what do we offer these children for the pleasures which we ask them to relinquish? Safety and restraint; and for the one they cannot realise the need, while the other they have learned to hate. We shall never succeed until we can provide some safety-valve through which they can expend the emotional energy which possesses them. I suppose many of us find this safety-valve ourselves in literature, and it is astonishing that so little has been done to place good literature within the reach of the poorest classes. Many of them read it as it is, but for every one that reads now there should be a dozen. Moreover, the stuff they generally read is as injurious as the sweets they are always sucking. In one sense it is harmless enough; there is nothing in it which could be objected to by the most rigid censor of the press; but the sickly sentimentality, the false ideals, the untrue pictures of life which are provided for the poor are a disgrace to both the culture and the enterprise of England. Why do not our publishers cater better for the people than this? It is no answer to say that there is no demand for higher literature. There was no demand for Sapolio until it was properly advertised. There is a fortune waiting for some enterprising capitalist who will reissue some of our best authors in really popular form; good print, but paper backs, a penny a volume, and advertised as thoroughly as the latest kind of beef-tea or blacking. Literature lends itself to advertisement better than any other kind of commodity; specimen pages well selected and breaking off at a critical moment, dropped down every area in London, with a direction to the nearest

news-shop, would sell off a first edition in an incredibly short time, and when once the appetite was awakened the work would go on of itself.

Now let me sum up briefly the directions which those reforms will take which will have most influence upon the welfare of London children.

1. Better sanitation and stricter regulations against overcrowding.

In a natural state of things the size of a town is settled, or at any rate limited, by its water supply. So many inhabitants will congregate together as can place themselves within convenient proximity to the river, and be supplied by it through all seasons. We have removed that limit by artificial water supplies, and we ought, in common sense, to safeguard ourselves against the results. To do so is no more to interfere with natural liberty than it is to poison the river and divert country lakes into the town as its substitute.

2. Conscientious discharge of duties by employers of labour and factory inspectors, such as will enable work to become once more what it naturally is—the chief source of health and enjoyment.

3. Recognition of the fact that the care of children is as much an art as is the care of animals or the making of chairs and tables, and proper instruction of girls in that art.

4. A more vigorous action of school managers in ensuring that the benefit derived from compulsory attendance at school is not immediately lost on leaving.

5. A supplementation of Board Schools by a system of paying schools, offering a higher and more elastic order of education, and adapted to the needs of the better-class artisan.

6. The placing of good literature within reach of the people.

The two last developments are sure to take place before long as purely commercial undertakings. For the others we must wait an awakening of public knowledge which may be slow to come.

IV

THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN[1]

By M. M'CALLUM

THE care of children is one of the most interesting as well as the most cheering branches of Poor Law administration, for by wise training we may reasonably hope to combat and diminish the weaknesses, both mental, moral, and physical, that account for so much pauperism. But in this as well as in all social efforts we must not "wander in generalities"; but must "compare particular with particular," or we may defeat our own ends, and in caring for the children we may increase the army of dependents where we had looked to diminish their numbers, for as demand produces supply, so a cheap supply creates and fosters demand, and the more easily we relieve paupers of their offspring during the years when they are a care and an expense, the more pauper children will be continually thrown upon our hands. Unless, therefore, we look beyond each individual case to the general effect of our actions and take measures to avoid this particular result, we shall repeat in another form the old error of artificially stimulating population, and that in a class not serviceable to the community at large.

It is always instructive to observe the course of events in countries where familiar difficulties, that often have their root in human nature, are being faced under new conditions; and it is significant that the Children's Relief

[1] Founded on a paper read at the S. E. Poor Law Conference, 1894.

Department in New South Wales, which began work with 59 children in 1881, had no fewer than 2537 under its care in 1893, although, according to the rather optimistic report, there are few instances "in which impostors have succeeded in foisting their offspring on the institution, and when detected they have been punished." In another colony it has been stated that the excellence of the State provision for children causes parents to take undue advantage of it, and that they have even been known to urge their children to steal in order to secure their committal to industrial schools. Facts of this nature strengthen the hands of those who contend that any increase in the public control of children, however desirable, must be accompanied by increased pressure on parents whose duties are being performed for them at the public cost.

The problem perpetually before us therefore may be briefly stated thus: In what way can we best influence and control our pauper children so as to give them the opportunity of becoming honourable and self-supporting members of society, without at the same time putting a premium on recklessly early marriages, on desertion and on wrongdoing, and without lessening that sense of family responsibility which it should be the aim of every good citizen to foster?

Some persons, it is true, consider this last argument "old-fashioned"; they do not apparently disapprove of the scarcely concealed selfishness that desires to escape the discharge of parental duty, and they are anxious to encourage at all hazards the habit of dependence on the State;[1] but I think the majority of the English people still value family life as the best source of those everyday virtues that make for good conduct, and where these virtues are unhappily absent, it should surely be our task to level up, not to level down, to maintain a high standard of duty rather than to adopt that of the weak and faulty.

Assuming this view as our basis, let us look at the state and administration of the laws concerning children.

[1] I have been criticised for using this phrase because it appears to separate the State from the nation, but as it conveys a familiar idea to the ordinary reader I prefer to retain it.

Since the Poor Law reform of 1834 public opinion in regard to dependent children has, on the whole, progressed steadily in the direction of better education, more judicious expenditure, and wiser control, though, as almost invariably happens, schemes from which far too much was expected have not only failed to fulfil the hopes of their promoters, but have produced quite unforeseen results, as in the case of "barrack" schools. However faulty the plan and the management of many of these schools has proved to be, we ought in fairness to remember that they are the result of an honest attempt to deal with some of the flagrant evils that existed before they were built, and the plain lessons of their partial failure ought not to be lost upon us. Public opinion unfortunately tends to extremes, and because it is now educated to the point of disapproving of the aggregation of crowds of children, it is inclined to overlook the equally serious results that would probably ensue on the adoption of a wholesale boarding-out scheme. Possibly the best solution of the difficulty may be found in smaller schools, in a better quality of superintendence, in the appointment of female inspectors, and above all, in the adoption of every reasonable measure that may diminish the perplexities of the Poor Law by making the way of the professional and of the potential pauper unattractive.

It may not always be remembered that persons in receipt of prolonged outdoor relief must now, as one of the conditions of such relief, send their children to a proper school, and guardians are recommended to satisfy themselves as to their due attendance.

The provisions for apprenticing boys, and for emigrating orphan and deserted children, testify to the care and thought bestowed upon these difficult subjects, and a perusal of the regulations adds weight to the conviction of many experts that the law is often both less faulty and less inadequate than the public is led to believe, and that when untoward incidents occur it is usually the administration that has failed. When it appears desirable that a deserted child should be sent to Canada, every effort must be made to find the parents, and they, if found, must give

consent in writing. The child, whether orphan or deserted, must itself give consent before two justices, and must be examined by the medical officer, who reports as to its mental and bodily health, and certifies whether it is, in his opinion, suitable for emigration to that country. This report and certificate are sent to the Local Government Board. The Guardians must have satisfactory evidence that the persons assuming charge here have a reasonable prospect of finding suitable homes; arrangements must be made for the care of the child on the voyage, and for its reception on landing; and immediately it is placed out, full particulars of the situation must be furnished both to the home Union and to the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa. The child must be placed with a Roman Catholic or Protestant household, according to its declared creed.

These regulations are partly the result of a report by an inspector who visited Canada in 1874, and it is difficult to see what more could be done by the machinery of a State department to ensure satisfactory results; yet, a couple of years ago, an official of the Charity Organisation Society, who was sent to Canada for another purpose, reported certain facts owing to which the authorities declined to employ a particular emigration agent through whose hands many children must have passed. Difficulties of one sort or another are, it is to be feared, certain to occur in the working of any scheme that deals with a considerable number of young and comparatively helpless persons.

With regard to the apprenticeship of boys, somewhat similar precautions are taken. The relieving officer reports at length to the Guardians on the proposed situation, and as he is liable to blame if it turns out badly, it is in his interest to make thorough inquiries. After a month's trial, the master and the boy come before the Board, and certain conditions as to sleeping accommodation, pocket-money, clothing, and teaching are explained and agreed to, the indentures are signed, and half the premium of ten pounds is paid. At the end of the first year the master and apprentice again attend, are questioned separately, and

if everything is satisfactory, the indentures for the last term of four years are signed, and the remainder of the premium handed over. The boys receive an outfit valued at four pounds. Sometimes the apprenticeship has to terminate even before the expiry of the first year, perhaps on account of incompatibility of temper, perhaps because a parent or relative unsettles the boy or makes a disturbance at the shop; but there are other and more pleasing incidents to chronicle, as, for example, when a Board proposed at the second visit to cancel some indentures on account of the infringement of one of the conditions, but the master showed such genuine regret, and the little 'prentice wept so bitterly at the thought of parting, that nobody had the heart to stand out for the letter of the law. Ample provision is made for dealing with "offences and disputes," and for interim visits and reports, the latter being usually sent in by the Young Men's and the Girls' Friendly Societies, as well as by the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, and other similar associations.

As regards service at sea we could wish for nothing better for our boys than that they should enter the Royal Navy; the tone, the discipline, and the open-air life of the Training Ships is precisely adapted to instil habits of alertness, self-control, and "smartness" in the sense in which the word is used in the service, while the positions open to them as petty or warrant officers, coastguardsmen, etc., are a further inducement to good conduct. The standard for entry, however, is in every respect a high one, and, perhaps, we cannot expect that many pauper boys will be able to pass it, especially in respect of the physical requirements. The vacancies in the Training Ships, too, are comparatively few in number, and the boys' parents, who are often singularly short-sighted, are apt to raise objections. Apprenticeship in the Mercantile Marine is an inferior alternative, and last in the scale comes the Fishing Service, in connection with which so many complaints have lately been made. Here, again, there is no lack of regulations, and in criticising the system it is well to bear in mind some of the special difficulties that attend the employment of these

boys. If we visit a London workhouse, or one of our large lunatic asylums, and observe carefully the faces of many of the inmates, we shall recognise types bearing the stamp of drink and of disease, and not far removed from those known as criminal. These are the parents of some of the children for whose future we have to provide, and it is no wonder that the task is a hard one. The apathy, the inertness, the temper, and the cunning, which are the inheritance of many of our dependent children, render them a source of endless perplexity and tax very heavily the patience of their employers. It is very probable that a sea-faring life is suggested as a last alternative for a rough and unmanageable boy, and in exceptionally good hands it might prove suitable, while in others the results cannot but be bad.

Space will not permit me to quote in detail the very excellent rules which provide for the selection of a foster-home, the appointment and proceedings of the supervising Committee, and the training and comfort of pauper children who are boarded out. Every aspect of the child's life has been considered, and at the risk of seeming to harp on one string I must repeat that the success or failure of the scheme depends solely on the character of those who carry it out. Members of the Committee should possess that trained judgment which is unhappily so rare, and for want of which work of this kind, whether official or voluntary, fails miserably. The visitor whose inspection is a matter of form because she "knows Mrs. Blank so very well," is not unlikely to find that her supposed intimacy is a matter of form also, and that the children under her supervision are suffering from her culpable lack of thoroughness. The solitary female inspector, on whose ceaseless watchfulness the Local Government Board relies, does all that is in her power to keep the Committees up to the mark, and is heartily seconded in her efforts by the best among them, but it is to be hoped that as the number of boarded-out children increases, a second inspector will be appointed. There is one important matter on which some difference of opinion arises: the rate of payment by the Guardians for

each child must not exceed four shillings per week, exclusive of clothing, school, and medical fees and extras in illness, and I believe that in some districts a smaller amount is given. In favour of this rate, it is alleged, with some show of reason, that an agricultural labourer does not spend four shillings a week on each of his children, that the foster-child bears its part in the duties of the home, and that it is undesirable to make the stranger, who is to be, as far as possible, merged in the family, differ too markedly from its companions. On the other hand, if we are to secure as foster-parents the better class of cottagers, who will fully perform the duties they undertake, it is only fair and reasonable that the mother should receive proper payment for her labour, and I sympathise with the working-man who said that he would not allow his wife so to add to her cares for such an inadequate sum.

Having briefly described the legal provisions for children who are actually under the care of the Guardians, we may proceed to review the Acts which enable them to assume control, and otherwise to interfere on behalf of children in general.

The Poor Law Act of 1889 enables the Guardians to assume entire control of a deserted child up to the age of sixteen if a boy, and eighteen if a girl, provided that such child has been wholly or partly maintained by them in any institution or certified school under the Act 25 and 26 Vict. chap. 43, or has been boarded out. Here a curious point arises, for the definition of the term "deserted" in the Boarding-out Order is a very wide one, including illegitimate children whose mother is in prison, or a lunatic, or permanently disabled, or an inmate of a workhouse, or out of England, as well as legitimate children deserted by both parents or one of them, the remaining parent coming under one of these conditions. If this definition could be applied to the Act of 1889, or if by the simple expedient of boarding-out the Guardians can assume control under all these conditions, their powers are wider than is generally supposed.

The Act is thoroughly satisfactory as far as it goes, for

while it enables Boards of Guardians to adopt the children, it does not relieve parents from the necessity of contributing to the maintenance of their offspring, and it allows appeals only to a court of summary jurisdiction where no costs are incurred. It also permits Guardians to place an adopted child temporarily with a parent or relative; and though I do not know that they often avail themselves of this clause, it is alleged that in Australia considerable use has been made of a similar permission, and that affection for a child and the hope of its return on probation have frequently brought about the reformation of offending parents. I have been unable to procure detailed information on this point, and obviously such probationary measures must involve careful and continuous supervision by competent agents; but as I am told that children are frequently boarded out in the suburbs of towns, it is probably easier to secure efficient inspection than in cases where the homes are scattered in the country. Experienced Guardians have very generally expressed an opinion that the protection of this Act should be extended to orphan children, whose case is practically almost on a par with that of the deserted. The somewhat vague instructional letter of February 1842 states that the Commissioners "*believe*" that Guardians have the same control over orphan children that a guardian has over his ward, and that they may retain such a child till the age of sixteen; but certainly the insertion of the word orphan in the Act would be of great service, for there can be no doubt that the claims made by relatives upon orphans who have reached wage-earning years too often cover a desire to profit by their labour, while such children, welcoming, as is natural, any friend who professes an interest in them, have neither the knowledge nor the ability that would enable them to protect themselves.

1889 may well be called the Children's Year, for, in addition to this Act, the passing of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act recorded the first decided attempt to abolish the hideous suffering to which children were formerly, and to some extent are still exposed, in order to

excite pity and to obtain the misguided charity which is, in truth, responsible for so large an amount of intemperance, crime, and pauperism. A very slight knowledge of the prolonged pain endured by these helpless little mortals in our streets, enables one to understand the fervour with which a good and self-sacrificing man thanked God on his deathbed that he had never given anything to a beggar. Public attention should especially be called to that section of the Act which renders liable to arrest without a warrant any "person who causes or procures any child under sixteen[1] to be in any street for the purpose of begging or receiving alms, *or of inducing the giving of alms*, whether under the pretence of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale, or otherwise."

If such children are taken to a workhouse as a "place of safety," Guardians may pay reasonable expenses in any proceedings that may be taken; but the appeal is to quarter sessions, and this Act, unlike the one that preceded it, gives no power to enforce contributions for maintenance, a grave omission which should be rectified. The same omission occurs in the short Act of 1891 "to amend the Law relating to the Custody of Children," which directs that if on appeal the Court orders that a child be given up to its parent, it may further order him to repay the whole or part of the cost of its upbringing; but if the Guardians are to retain the child on account of the parent's unfitness, he is allowed to go scot-free. Differences in the law represent no doubt the fluctuation of public or of official opinion or of both; but in this case not only is a fundamental principle overlooked, but the worse the character of the parent the more completely is he relieved from even pecuniary liability—an arrangement that, in the old phrase, "is a premium on idleness and crime." There can, I think, be little doubt that it is the element of poverty that obscures the issues in this matter of liability, for when a member of a well-to-do family is unhappily brought to a workhouse through

[1] This is the age of protection in the latest Act.

misconduct, or perhaps as a lunatic, no Board would hesitate for a moment to require that the friends should recoup them for the expenses incurred. The importance of the principle ought nevertheless to be recognised, and all Acts dealing with maintenance of children should be brought into line upon this point.

The Amendment in 1894 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act raised the age of protection to sixteen, and made some additions; one of the most important of these provided that a parent should be liable as if for neglect, if, being without means, he failed to provide for his child's maintenance under the Acts for the relief of the poor. Possibly this clause might have covered the very distressing cases in which destitute and often unhealthy parents utterly refuse to allow their children to be sent to schools, or to accept relief in the House. There are few things more painful to a conscientious Guardian than to have to stand aside helplessly, while a man lingers for months in phthisis, and wife and children live and perhaps sleep in the same room, breathing the tainted atmosphere, and probably contracting the fatal disease. Appeals to the reason or affection of the invalid are met with the unyielding reply, "I do not like the children to go to school; I will not go into any hospital or infirmary," and interference is then impossible. It would be interesting to know on what grounds this important clause has been omitted from the Act of consolidation passed less than a month after the Act of amendment. Under the consolidating Act inebriate parents may be sent to one of those retreats of which there are far too few. Sentence of imprisonment for an offence under the Act may be passed for six months instead of three. Any person having custody of a child and allowing him to infringe the Act shall be liable as if he had caused that infringement.

Lastly, by the Industrial Schools Act of 1894 every child passing through such schools, though discharged at sixteen, is under the control of the managers till eighteen—an excellent safeguard, especially in the case of girls.

These are of course not pauper children, but have committed some offence for which they have been charged before a magistrate.

The Bromley Board of Guardians passed a resolution last year in favour of extending the Act of 1889, so as to protect not only orphan but "other children who, for a length of time, have been maintained by the rates, and whose future interests may appear to the Board to be imperilled."

Having consulted a few Guardians in different parts of England before writing this paper, I found that while those in the country were satisfied with their present powers, Guardians in towns felt the difficulties which press even more severely on us in London.

There is a class of parents who cannot be said to be other than respectable, but who leave their children to be brought up at the cost of the rates in parish schools, and who then remove them just before they are fourteen, so as to obtain the 2s. 6d. a week that they will earn in that "little place," which teaches them nothing, and too often unfits them for any trade. What, for example, becomes of the average message-boy when he outgrows a boy's wages? Other parents again allow the Guardians to place out the children, and then, as I have already said, unsettle them or obtain their dismissal, often less from a bad motive than from a very common tendency to misapprehension and impatience. No doubt such cases are both disheartening and vexatious to the Guardians and School Managers who have done their best for the children, but I cannot think that they are of such frequent occurrence as alone to justify an alteration of the law. Our best defence lies in bettering both the general education, and particularly the moral and manual training, of the children while they are in our care. The manual training should be directed more towards stimulating the intelligence and creating fresh interests than towards supplying necessaries for the school; but in order to extract the full educational value from such training the very highest teaching power must be enlisted. This is perhaps

difficult to obtain, for there is little encouragement for a good teacher in dealing with children, many of whom go to and fro, so that there is no continuity in their work, while others are on the border-line of mental weakness. It is greatly to be desired that more persons interested in the Poor Law, and in children generally, would study the exceedingly valuable results of an inquiry into the condition of 50,000 children made by Dr. Francis Warner. This undertaking was begun by the British Medical Association and carried on by the Charity Organisation Society, and the results were laid before the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography in 1891; the sympathetic reader will learn from this little volume[1] more about the facts and problems of child pauperism and about the need of Homes for feeble-minded girls than can ever be gathered from the vague statements of theorists. The difficulties that surround all attempts at moral training are clearly indicated, and teachers can but strive to make the children ashamed to tell a lie, and to awaken in them, more especially in the girls, a sense of personal self-respect, for by this means can they best reach some of the many roots of pauperism, and efface the real "pauper taint," a taint of character too often inherited and strengthened by early surroundings.

It is a different matter when the children are removed from the care of the Guardians by a parent who is known to be leading an unsatisfactory life, although escaping actual conviction of immorality or crime; and it is open to question whether, in such a case, Guardians might be enabled by a special appeal to a court of summary jurisdiction, or by some other method, to obtain an extension of their period of control. I am inclined to think, however, that little use would be made of any method more cumbersome than the passing of a resolution; while, on the other hand, arbitrary interference with the natural relation of parent and child should not be rendered too easy.

Let us apply our most stringent powers to three classes

[1] *The Feeble-Minded*, Charity Organisation Series. Swan Sonnenschein.

of flagrant offenders—the "ins-and-outs," vagrants, and street-beggars. The name "ins-and-outs" expressively characterises a class that is the despair of all thoughtful Guardians. These people can best be described as the resident vagrants of a district who use the Workhouse as an hotel and come and go at their pleasure, making sometimes from twenty to thirty admissions and discharges in a year. They are often the most troublesome inmates of the Workhouse, always ready to cheat and steal, and their skill in the arts of provocation and of insult constitute a severe tax on the patience and self-control of the officials. When they come in, their children are sent to school with as much despatch as is consistent with the necessary cleansing—a process which often requires more time than the uninstructed public would suppose. When the parent or parents go out, the children accompany them, to return again later to the schools, carrying with them the evil knowledge they have acquired in their absence. I have known parents of this stamp ask for their discharge, and when the children have been fetched, at the expense of course of the rates, they have "changed their minds" and have refused to leave, their only object having been to exercise their power and compel the officials to go through the requisite formalities. Would it not be better to acknowledge that these unhappy people will never be self-supporting citizens, and can never contribute to the maintenance of their usually numerous children, and to deal with them therefore as persons responsible to the State for the neglect of social duties which they undertake with an absolutely reckless disregard of their inability to discharge them?

It would seem to be for the general good that such children should be adopted and placed at a distance from their early surroundings, but that, nevertheless, the parents should be detained in the House for considerable periods, increasing according to the number of dependent children. When a woman has five or six illegitimate children all brought up at the public cost, I think the community would be justified in such a measure, and the same argument would apply to vagrants and street-beggars, though it would

be difficult to say at what place a tramp without a settlement should be provided for. It should be remembered that if these children were boarded out in any numbers, there would always be a risk of the vagrant parent finding the child and disgracing it, even if unable to remove it, for the extent of the vagrants' intelligence department has often been a subject of comment.

It will naturally be objected that measures of detention will add to our heavy rates, but a wise expenditure may bring about a future saving, and I believe that it is the truest economy, as well as the most humane policy, to adopt any measure that will act as a deterrent or as a check upon the pauperisation of children. As a matter of fact, there would be much less for the Poor Law to do, were it not for the persistency with which the public creates and fosters an army of tramps for that law to deal with in the end, and the sums that are thrown away in this manner would be of more use to the community in the form of a rate. As an instance of this waste, I am informed that certain shelters, supported by charity in the East End of London, lock their doors in the day-time; this appears to be the best method for maintaining young and old as beggars, and contrasts very unfavourably with the provisions of the Poor Law, but many ascertained results of the system of shelters suggest the need of somewhat drastic measures of reform.

As regards beggars with children, the intention of the Act of 1889 seems to be perfectly plain, but for some reason the administration of it is deficient, and numbers of children still wander through the streets of our towns and are trained in evil.

I have more than once consulted policemen in London about such cases; but they say that the weather is warm, and they cannot allege undue exposure; or the people are not begging, they are only singing; or that the parents may be receiving alms, but the children are not doing so. They do not seem to rely on the sentence, "Any person who causes a child . . . to be in any street for the purpose of begging . . . or inducing the giving of alms, whether under

pretence of singing," and so forth. I have repeatedly been told that such persons can only be dealt with by giving them money and then prosecuting them—a task which should surely not be imposed on any casual passer-by, but should be undertaken by the public authorities for the public good.

There is something strangely short-sighted and inconsistent in our spending huge sums on our workhouses and schools, in our talking and writing about abolishing the pauper taint and saving the children, while we still allow them to swell the beggars' ranks; it is as though we were for ever pouring water through a sieve. Not long ago I watched a couple walk down my own street with a child, a very bright-looking boy of eight or nine, whom they caressed, as they looked up at the windows in the pauses of their song, in a somewhat dramatic fashion. The excellent Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has made the old-fashioned exhibition of rags and dirt more or less perilous, and this little fellow was dressed in a smart sailor suit, and money was showered upon the party. At one house the boy was beckoned to the door and given something. A policeman stands near the end of the street, but he did not and never does interfere, so that with all our machinery we are seemingly unable to protect such a boy, and insist that he shall be educated in another school than that of the street and of the beggar. Worse still is the case of a child who was seen to go round a certain set of tram-cars begging from each passenger.

Not long ago a working woman was about to give a penny to a singer of hymns who led two small children, "because," as she said, "I thought the poor soul had tried to do her best by them; they had such nice clean collars on." She paused, however, on seeing them stop at a public-house, where the singer "stood drinks" to two other women, after which interlude she beat one of the children cruelly in the street. She was arrested for this and was imprisoned *along with the mother from whom she had borrowed the children*, and they, being sent to the Workhouse, were found to be in a quite filthy condition. Now had

this person confined herself to her hymns she might have gone on unchecked, and the incident shows how shrewdly the beggar estimates his audience and understands that the presence of children (and the bait of the collars) "induces the giving of alms." Is it possible that the police cannot rely on the magistrates to see as clearly?

Whatever the cause of the present state of things, no occasion for protest should be lost, for only thoughtful people will consider the real effects of street-doles, and we cannot now, after the fashion of our shrewd ancestors, pass laws punishing persons who give alms to vagrants; the only course left to us therefore as regards the children is to prohibit entirely their appearance in the street for such purposes as are indicated in the Act, and to promote the control of the progeny of vagrants and beggars, and the detention of the unworthy parents by the Guardians on such conditions as I have indicated.

If, as I believe, far more could be done under existing laws than is now attempted, what we have to do is to create a healthier opinion and to improve the administration, for on that, in the long run, we must depend; in good hands even a faulty law may accomplish much, while in the hands of hesitating or indifferent or inexperienced administrators the best scheme that ever was framed will be worthless.

Surely it must be possible, in the name of the children, to induce English men and women to bring to bear on matters that concern the little ones some measure of English thoroughness and common sense, so that money and time may not be wasted on breeding up paupers for the next generation to relieve, but that both may be worthily bestowed on measures of prevention as well as on constructive effort.

How much might be done for family life and for the next generation if the almost universal mothers' meetings were centres for instruction in domestic duties. The care and training of the children, who suffer now so largely from ignorance and mismanagement, is surely a more fitting subject than the colourless story which is usually selected by the reader.

What an incalculable difference might be wrought if we could leave the Poor Law to deal sternly with professional beggars, if we could improve and specialise the training of children handicapped by hereditary weakness, and gather into really attractive homes the feeble-minded girls, many of whom feel their own unfitness for everyday life, and whose career, if left to themselves, is too often one of shame and misery!

These are among the many ends which should command the interest of all who desire to better the moral and physical conditions of the generation that will succeed us.

V

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY[1]

By H. Dendy

In that portion of the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour which is devoted to the employment of women, we have the first-fruits of the first serious attempt to grapple with the problem of the part played by women in industry. In its present form, the Report presents us with so much information which is necessarily in the form of details and particular cases, that it becomes difficult to grasp the question in its wider bearings, or to see one's way to any more solid conclusion than that the working-women of England are indeed in a very sorry plight, and that if knights-errant were still to the fore they would find work enough for lance and sword in freeing their sisters from the tyranny by which they are oppressed. Not that the Report is without its brighter sides; it is not wanting in the exceptional instances which show us what may be, and point the way to better things. Meanwhile, it is well that a knowledge of what is should be as widely spread as possible, and I propose, therefore, to summarise briefly the leading features in some typical industries, in the hope that readers of *The National Review* may be induced to invest two shillings and tenpence in the Report, and study the facts at first hand.

One of the first things by which one is struck is, that earnings vary more within the different employments than

[1] From *The National Review* for August 1894.

between the different employments. There is an absence of anything approximating to a fixed, or even an average, rate of wage, which is very remarkable; and, with a few exceptions, there is an absence of any great superiority of earnings in one branch of industry over another. An even greater inequality may be noticed in the conditions under which the work is carried on; a factor which, as circumstances at present stand, is of graver importance to the welfare of women than the actual rate of wages.

If we look at the employment first dealt with in the Report, that of shop-assistants, we find the wages varying from under £15 a year (with board and lodging) to over £100 (with board and lodging). The latter rate is, of course, exceptional, more so, we fear, than the former; but between these two extremes every rate may be found. Nor does it depend entirely upon the individual, as the same woman will vary (and not always for the better) with almost every change of place, and changes are very frequent. Of course, it must be borne in mind that the actual money wage goes a very little way towards measuring the advantages and the disadvantages of such a situation; the hours of work vary greatly, though not so much as the money. The range is, roughly speaking, from 53 to 79 hours a week; the London shops, as a rule, working for much longer hours than those in the provinces, Wales being the most considerate in this way, and Scotland (? Glasgow) sinning to the extent of 93, 96, 99, and even 102 hours. Besides the hours of work, there are many considerations which may affect the comfort, and too often the health, of the shop-assistant. Some employers—we fear many—show a negligence which amounts to brutality, in failing to provide proper sanitary arrangements; and where the women live on the premises we find every degree of consideration, or the reverse, in the way of providing proper living and sleeping accommodation. Harassing regulations may also be made a source of great misery. Compare, for instance, the evidence of an assistant as to her employment in different, but very similar, London districts. At A she gets £20 a year, at

B £25; but whereas at A she works only 66½ hours a week, at B she works 75½ hours; at A she has twenty minutes' rest in the day, at B none; at A she gets premiums on her sales, at B none; *at neither are seats allowed;* at A she may stay indoors all day on Sunday if she wishes, and finds it very comfortable; at B she must go out without breakfast and remain out all day (think what this means to a young girl in London, possibly without friends); at A she has the use of an excellent library and piano, a private sitting-room, and a doctor when ill; at B she says the food is poor and the accommodation disgraceful. We need not be surprised to hear that at B the effect on her health is complete prostration, while at A it is merely "not so injurious." That seems to be the best which can be said for any of them on the score of health; here, at any rate, we get little variation. Indigestion, anæmia, and worse ailments are invariable, and will continue to be so until better arrangements are general. Take the one question of providing seats; much was heard about it at one time, and the impression certainly got abroad that matters had improved. But out of a list of twenty-seven shops, concerning which evidence is given, only two provide seats for their assistants. No wonder that we are told as a significant fact, that "whereas large numbers of factory girls cannot be prevailed upon to give up their factory work after marriage, the majority of shop-assistants look upon marriage as the one hope of release, and would, as one girl expressed it, 'marry any one to get out of the drapery business.'"

The conditions of the milliners and dressmakers differ comparatively little from those of shop-assistants. Wages range about the same, except that there is a higher limit for first hands; it is probably the chance of attaining to this higher limit which affords the economic justification for the fact that it is more usual for dressmakers and milliners to pay a premium, or to give two or three years' service, than it is for shop-assistants.

Another employment in which the conditions are more injurious to health—and perhaps more inevitably so—is

laundry work. Considering the amount of skill necessary to a good laundress, the general earnings are small, ranging from 6s. to 25s. a week; but the hours of work, although sometimes long, do not exceed to quite the same extent as in the employments already mentioned, varying from 36 to 70 in the week. Laundresses, however, seldom work every day in the week, the work of the ironers being necessarily preceded by that of the washers. Moreover, laundresses, especially in the West of London, are said to be a very independent race, working long hours under pressure, and liking to take their ease when it suits them. Many of them are married women whose husbands are more or less failures, and many find it thirsty work, and succumb to the temptation to drink. It is distressing to hear that "ladies screw down laundries dreadfully"; there seems also to be reason to suppose that they might contribute essentially towards easing the conditions of laundry work by having a more plentiful supply of linen, and so avoiding the rush of work into two or three days. Hotels also sin in this way by having an insufficient supply, and insisting on having their work done in a hurry.

Amongst employments more generally recognised as dangerous, are those of the match-workers and the white-lead-workers. The latter occupation is peculiarly injurious, and more so to women than to men, the poison affecting them at an earlier age, and being more fatal in its results. Moreover, women are unavoidably prevented from taking all the precautions which are open to men, and are thus more liable to incur the ill-effects. Colic, paralysis, epilepsy, wrist-drop, blindness, loss of speech,—these are some of the horrors which lie in wait for the unfortunate lead-workers. It is worth while to note the statement that the *means of prevention are mainly within the power of employers.* Of how they exercise, or fail to exercise, that power we have more to say later on. Earnings in this trade certainly do not include much compensation for risk. About 2s. a day, or from 8s. to 14s. a week, seems to be the ordinary run; and this is said to be about half what the men earn for the same quality and quantity of work.

Among the match-workers there is not such a grim variety of disease, and the cases of necrosis are comparatively rare. Employers, moreover, seem more awake to their responsibility, both for prevention and cure. The match-buying public may like to be told that the disease is found to occur mainly, if not entirely, amongst makers of non-safety wood matches; let the public, therefore, confine themselves to the innocuous wax vesta and patent safety, and so do their part towards stamping out this pest.

Straw-plaiting and straw-hat-making are interesting because of the variety of economic problems which they illustrate. The former industry has declined, owing to competition from China and Italy; the Chinese can make and sell in England, at 7d. the 120 yards, a plait which the English cannot sell in their native place under 6¾d. for 20 yards. Why is this? The President of the Chamber of Commerce says it is because, "whereas formerly plaiting was taught in the dame-schools, under the Education Act of 1870 the elementary schools are not allowed to give such instruction." It is only fair to the Education Act to add that he also says that since sewing-machines were introduced women can earn more by machining imported plaits than by plaiting; if the Chinaman merely sets free our women to do better-paid work, we need not grudge him his 7d.

Besides the problem of foreign competition, this business also illustrates the effects of home-industry, of irregularity of earnings (varying with the season from 6s. to 40s.), and—unfortunately—of the want of versatility in the worker. They decline to learn new ways. "Each village, perhaps, has three or four patterns to which it has grown accustomed, and they continue to produce them in spite of the fact that there is no demand for them."

In the textile industries in Yorkshire the tendency seems to be for women's work to be substituted for that of men; they are almost invariably paid at a lower rate, only one instance of equality being found, and there the men are paid upon the women's scale. The women's scale is used as the basis of calculation for all wages. Earnings vary from about 7s. or 8s. to an occasional 20s., 13s. to

15s. being the most common amount. Here, again, we find very various conditions, the chief sources of discomfort being bad sanitation and ventilation, harassing fines, and danger from the absence of proper guards to the shuttles. The most unhealthy part of the work seems to be the sorting and picking of rags for the manufacture of shoddy; many of these are foreign, and arrive in a filthy condition, giving rise to an appropriate complaint known as "shoddy fever."

In Lancashire we reach a higher level. There all weavers are paid alike, and men and women do the same work. "Many women earn, as weavers, about 24s. a week all the year through, whereas in Yorkshire 18s. a week is an exceptional wage for women weavers, and is seldom maintained for any length of time. The wages of weavers in Lancashire, men and women, when in full employment, are equal, on an average, to those of the best men weavers, when in full employment, in the highest paid district of Yorkshire."

The conditions of work, however, are, if anything, rather worse in Lancashire than in Yorkshire: sanitary accommodation abominable, ventilation generally bad, and an almost universal absence of guards to the shuttles, which have a casual way of knocking out the women's eyes and teeth, which one would think might be worth guarding against. An additional evil results to the cotton spinners from the steaming which is nearly always employed as a means of softening the cotton, and which inevitably leads to rheumatism and prostration. And yet there is an alternative which, according to one witness, is quite as cheap as the steaming, though not perhaps so picturesque as one we remember to have read of as successfully practised in an American mill, where the atmosphere is kept moist by growing plants.

In silk-weaving wages range lower, averaging in the different districts 7s., 10s., and 11s. 6d. per week; hours are from 46½ to 56. There is an unwholesome process known as "gassing"; but, on the whole, the general conditions of work are better than in the other textile in-

dustries. Ventilation is, however, generally much neglected. It is refreshing to read of one mill where "pleasant grounds are attached . . . in which the women take their meals during the summer, and during spare time in the dinner-hour a woman is employed by the firm to teach them to make their own clothes. The material is supplied at cost price by the firm. There is a small free library in connection with the mill for the use of the operatives, and the dining-room is used during the winter evenings for dancing lessons and entertainments organised by the firm."

In Birmingham women's work is on a low level, although there is a considerable variation in earnings and an almost endless variety of small industries. In one of the worst paid of these, wages range from under 6s. to 12s., and 40.4 per cent of the hands get under 6s. In the jewellery trade they average from 8s. to 11s. and work 52½ hours a week, while in the cocoa and chocolate works earnings rise above 18s. Much difficulty was thrown in the way of inquiries in this town, and objections to giving information were frequent. The worst feature in the industrial life of Birmingham (and one which will account for the low level of wages) is said to be the employment in factories and workshops of married women whose husbands are well able to maintain them. Girls are employed in processes which are absolutely useless in home-life; the rate of infant mortality is very high; and a comfortable home is said to be the exception. On the other hand, Birmingham may take credit to itself in that it is doubtful "whether there is any town in England where the evils are so clearly recognised, and efforts to remove them so vigorously and sensibly made"; and, again, that "so far as public effort is concerned, it may be safely said that, in Birmingham, if any scheme can be proved worth carrying out it will be undertaken."

A considerable section of the Report is devoted to women serving in places of refreshment. Here we get the maximum of long hours, amounting sometimes to over 100 in the week; and it is not the least merit of the temperance houses that their hours are never known to

exceed 70 in the week, while the Aerated Bread Company is attempting, by a system of double shifts, to bring the hours down to 56. The most objectionable branch of this employment is, of course, in public-houses; and though the position of barmaid is said by some witnesses to be very suitable for a steady girl and in a properly conducted house, yet all agree that it is only the "strong-minded" girls who can come through it successfully. The temptation to drink is great, and although a barmaid who is known to drink is seldom kept on in a situation, there must be many who have received the first impulse on the downward path at the bar. Like the shop-girls, waitresses suffer much from the effects of long standing. Wages vary from 8s. to 20s. a week, with and without board and lodging, the greater number receiving about 10s. But the money wage is hardly any measure of the real remuneration, "the gratuities of waitresses often largely exceed their wages"; in some refreshment bars where drinking with customers is not allowed, a girl may ask to have a box of chocolates instead, and this may be sold again to the manageress. Some restaurants give all the food free, others—such as the Aerated Bread Company and Coffee Tavern Company—a considerable amount; some give medical attendance, and some have convalescent homes; some pay for washing (which the wearing of white collars and cuffs makes a considerable expense), some do not. Obviously, it is impossible to form any general estimate, either of earnings or of well-being, in this walk of life. That it has its compensations must be concluded from the fact that the girls entering into it are both drawn from and occupy a higher social status than those who enter domestic service, probably even than shop-assistants.

Interesting evidence is given in connection with the printing trade, especially in Edinburgh. The women are said to be healthy, well-paid, and contented. This does not mean that they are paid at the same rate as the men, but it is generally allowed that there are many parts of the work which can only be done by men at present. But it is

significant that whereas, when the women are paid by time on the established wage, they earn from 4s. to 15s. a week, when working by piece they can earn 20s. to 35s.; this, however, seems to be exceptional. In London, women are subject to the difficulty that printers refuse to teach them any but the lower branches of work, and that they, nevertheless, will not allow them to be employed in a Union shop unless at the same rate as men. From several witnesses, however, it would appear that women show little inclination to learn the more skilled work, and it is perhaps fair to assume that when women are resolved to advance in this line they will find a way of doing so. As it is, the earnings of women who have served their apprenticeship vary from 12s. to 20s.

As an instance of the depths to which women's industry can be dragged when unprotected by the comparative publicity of the shop, and when the wages are subsidised from the rates, we may quote the case of two women in Lambeth who work at home at "finishing" trousers for tailors. The rate of pay is 6d. a pair for men's trousers, from which about ½d. must be deducted for thread; for this 5½d. they have to "join pieces for linings, run them in, hem them all round, put on bands, sew on 12 buttons, and make 6 button-holes." Not a bad sixpennyworth for the employer! or should we say for the customer? These women can earn between them not more than 9s. in eight days; they pay 4s. 6d. rent, and receive Poor Law relief. This, we regret to say, is an instance which we could match with many from our own experience.

Though these are only a few of the industries dealt with, they may be taken as fairly representative of the state of women's industry at the present day. On the whole, the Report leaves us not unhopeful of the future; the progress that has been made in one or two directions shows that there is no insuperable obstacle to women's holding an honourable position in the industrial army,—a position, that is, in which they will neither do bad work nor receive bad pay; where, therefore, they will help the men to maintain a high standard, and be no longer open

to the accusation of dragging them down to their own level. Meanwhile, we are convinced that the industrial inferiority of women is due to the fact that so many women who work have no independent economic position, but are mere adjuncts to the men. Want of skill, irregularity, inferiority of work, all the minor causes to which low wages are often attributed, may be reduced to this one cause: that in the majority of cases the men are earning the living, and the women are working either for pocket-money or for an escape from the monotony of home-life. We have seen the effect of this in Birmingham; the fact itself is still more strikingly illustrated on p. 183 of the Report, where we are told that in certain districts in Scotland the textile industries are decaying because of the migration of miners. The men take their families with them, the rate of wages in the textile industries being too low to enable women to detach themselves from their families. In the section dealing with Wales, again, it is pointed out (p. 235) that the rate of wages of shop-assistants is lower than in other places because of the number of farmers', colliers', and quarrymen's daughters who crowd into the towns in search of occupation. The women who work from choice set both the rate of wages and the standard of work for the women who work from necessity; but that this position is not inevitable has been proved by the Lancashire weavers.

Where the Report is most depressing is not on this question of wages, which every one allows to be beyond the power of individuals to control, but which seems likely to right itself in the course of time. It is where we read of conditions which are beyond doubt within the control of those concerned that our pity and indignation are aroused. We can forgive the most inveterate abusers of employers; we can look leniently upon the wildest schemes of Socialism; we can almost find it in our hearts to seek excuses for Anarchists themselves, when we reflect upon the cold-blooded indifference to suffering, the hard-hearted brutality of employers, which is depicted in the sober evidence of the pages before us.

To justify the use of epithets we must quote a few more instances, though for the worst we must refer our readers to the Report itself. We have already alluded to the horrible complaints to which lead-workers are liable, and to the statement that "the means of prevention are mainly within the power of employers." There are special regulations issued under the Factory and Workshops Act with reference to this employment: let us see how they are carried out. The first is that employers shall provide sufficient bath accommodation for all men and women employed. Many witnesses concur in saying that in many cases the accommodation is insufficient, while in one factory there is only one bath for all the workers, men and women. Another is, that they shall arrange for a weekly visit by a doctor, who shall examine every worker individually. In one factory the doctor has only paid one visit during several years, and on that occasion he examined the men but did not ask to see any of the women. In another, although the doctor visits once a week, he does not examine the workers, but merely ticks their names as they pass through the room in which he sits. And so it goes on. Employers are supposed to supply a sufficient number of towels, etc., in the lavatories; these are found to be in a filthy condition, and in one factory the supply is so insufficient that women are obliged to use their own clothing, which is saturated with lead. They are supposed to provide acid drinks to counteract the effects of the poison; in only one factory is this properly done. They are to give any person feeling unwell an immediate order upon the doctor, and to provide the prescribed medicine; in one factory the workers are refused orders for the doctor, and obliged to go into the Workhouse when ill.

For the worst cases of neglect of sanitary arrangements, and the consequent effect upon the workers, we refer readers to the chapter on the Cotton Industry in Cheshire and Lancashire; they will not bear quoting. As an example of the way in which employers accept their responsibilities we may, however, cite Mill No. 289, in which

the thermometer is watered twice daily at the time appointed under the Act for taking the temperature. Of course the only radical cure for these evils is a wider interpretation of their duty by the employers, upon whom the wellbeing of so many people depends. The defect is probably as much in their imaginations as in their consciences, and if they could once be made to realise for how many painful and ruined lives they are making themselves responsible, the ingenuity which is at present directed towards evading the Factory Acts would turn itself towards devising new remedies for existing evils.

Meanwhile, more might be done, pending the awakening of the employers, towards the effective carrying out of present legislation. We may conclude by quoting the opinion expressed by one of the Lady Assistant Commissioners who have compiled this Report, "that the conditions of mill life in Yorkshire for women and children could be much improved by a more thorough system of inspection in factories. It is not possible for the present staff of inspectors to devote time to detailed inquiry; nor is it possible that they should, without such inquiry, become acquainted with the conditions of women's labour. The difference of wages for men and women, where both are engaged in the same employment, appears to be a matter for trade organisation, but the due ventilation of the workrooms, the safety of the machinery, and the necessary sanitary arrangements could be enforced by law, *i.e.* if it were possible for the inspections to be efficiently carried out."

VI

MARRIAGE IN EAST LONDON[1]

By H. Dendy

Opposite my study window stands the parish church, and the shady path leading from the gates up to the church door is strewn as white as if snow had fallen with rice, which will lie there until a shower of rain has softened it sufficiently to make an acceptable meal for the sparrows. It is Bank Holiday, the fashionable wedding-day in our part of the world, and large numbers of lads and lasses have celebrated it in the most approved way by getting married. All the morning there has been a noisy crowd round the church gates, and a row of the shabbiest vehicles and most broken-down horses in London has stood waiting to carry off the wedding parties to the railway station or to the nearest public-house. The path down from the church doors is a fairly long one, and affords ample opportunity for the boisterous merrymaking which is universal on these occasions, and which often degenerates into something very like a free fight—though generally of a good-humoured nature. Some twenty or thirty couples have chosen this way of spending their holiday, and it is interesting, if somewhat sad, to see their first start into the new life which awaits them. The majority have chartered an old cab; sometimes they rise to two or three, while sometimes two or three couples crowd into one. Five shillings a cab, to hold any number,

[1] From the *Contemporary Review*.

is the standard charge for a wedding; and a "walking wedding" is the exception. Into these vehicles they ascend with what dignity they can preserve amongst the mingled chaff and admiration of the ragged spectators, and it is significant of future relations that the brides generally sit with their backs to the horses, while the bridegrooms light their pipes as they drive away. If it is a walking wedding, the party separates into two groups: the men, including the bridegroom, lounge off smoking and shouting, followed by the group of excited, chattering women. In this way they will spend the day, "sampling" the public-houses and making merry among their friends, until any lingering traces of the sobering effects of the morning ceremony have been well washed away. One such party I have watched followed up and down the streets by a practical joker with a hand-bell, who was greatly appreciated by the corner-men and street arabs. The toilets are wonderful to behold. They range through all varieties, from the orthodox white veil and flowing train to the glowing greens and purples of the coster-girl, whose wedding dress and hat will make patches of dirty brightness up and down the slums for years to come. The men are hardly less wonderful in the varieties of their ready-made or second-hand suits; and figures which are passable enough as they stand behind their barrows, collarless and in shirt-sleeves, become deplorable spectacles of self-conscious awkwardness when attired for the first time in a complete suit, and adorned with a floral button-hole.

One wonders, watching them, at the light-hearted way in which they take this step. For the girls especially it means burdens which seem almost too heavy to be borne —of care and sickness and poverty, of hopeless squalor or unceasing toil, leading to premature old age or death. By the time they are twenty-five all the elasticity and vigour of youth are crushed out of them, and those who maintain their self-respect have nothing to look forward to but drudgery. These early marriages are the curse of the poor, yet the causes which lead to them are often almost inconceivably slight—a fit of pique, a taunt from some

companion, the desire for a lark, or a bet; frequently there is no more substantial foundation than this in their choice of a life-companion, and the consequences cannot fail.

Among the more thoughtful, and more carefully brought up, there is, of course, a sort of courtship; but it is quaintly different from that which takes place in the higher ranks of society. From the first glimmerings of inclination there is no secret about it; Jack and Jane are "going together"; and when this going together passes into a formal engagement it is difficult to say—generally, I think, not until the day is fixed. It is a preliminary probation, rather than an engagement, and the experiment can be given up without much blame attaching to either side. "You wouldn't have us take the first that comes?" a girl will say; "and how can we know whether we like them unless we go with them?" How, indeed! in the crowded homes of the poor there is little room for quiet social intercourse, and parents have no time, if they had the inclination, to superintend the matrimonial ventures of their daughters. So acquaintance begins in the course of work or at some festivity, and ripens on trips to Kew Gardens and Hampstead Heath, is fostered by treatings to the theatre or music hall, and culminates when Jack gets a rise in wages and Jane has saved up enough for a wedding dress and her share of the furniture.

Such a pair will, perhaps, have as good a chance of happiness as any; they have learned to know each other under the ordinary routine of workaday life, and it is not left to marriage to divulge the failings of temper and character on either side. From a worldly point of view their position will not seem much to boast of to young people who regard money in the bank and a fixed income as indispensable conditions of life. Capital they have none, beyond what they may possess of skill and strength. Any little savings will be invested in the home, which—like Traddles—they mostly pick up bit by bit; beginning even before they have turned their attention towards any particular mate. The girl, if she is of the better sort, will

probably have managed to get a sewing-machine on the hire system, and this will go a long way towards furnishing the single room in which they start life together. During the first year, while the wife is still earning, many little articles of luxury will be added, which will gradually disappear as the family increases and troubles accumulate. Have you never wondered, on looking in at the pawnbroker's windows, where all the gaudy little overmantels, and elaborate tea-services, and numberless plated spoons and forks come from? They are the harvest of the first "bad times" after marriage. It is not quite such a tragedy as it appears, though sad enough; "selling the home" is with East Londoners a recognised method of raising money, and many articles are avowedly bought with a view to being handy for the pawnbroker. It is a part of their principle of life, the subordination of future needs to present fancies, and they argue that it is better to enjoy luxuries while they can than to have money lying idle in the savings-bank.

Were it not for this false economy of borrowing from the future which vitiates all poorer London (and makes co-operative stores an impossibility) young people of this class might find it no bad venture to throw in their lots together, and trust to their own right hands to pull them through life. But at a little lower level we find courage degenerating into foolhardiness, and self-confidence into a childish inability to foresee even the inevitable claims of the future. What is to be said for instances like the following, which are to be numbered, not by tens or hundreds, but by thousands?

A. B. is aged twenty-one, and has a wife and three children to support; he does it by turning a piano-organ to the accompaniment of a tin whistle. His story is that he was put to work at fourteen, got tired of it, ran away to sea and got tired of that; he came home, and at sixteen married a girl of fifteen, and was obliged to do whatever he could to keep her. He is a well-made, active, rather intelligent young fellow, capable of doing better things by nature, but hopelessly dragged down by the responsibilities he has so recklessly assumed.

C. D. is of another sort; dull mentally and feeble physically, he has never supported even himself for a whole year, but has always been kept by his widowed mother through the winter. Last year he married a girl of eighteen, rather pretty and as helpless as a baby. He explains that he thought that two could get along as well as one, and "perhaps something might turn up." Something has turned up, and there are now three to keep; the mother declines the addition to her already heavy burden, and the Workhouse looms large before them.

Couples such as these will not even wait to get a decent home together. An old bedstead and bedding, two rickety chairs and a table to match, a strip of greasy carpet and two or three cracked cups and saucers—these will be collected from sympathising neighbours, or picked up for a few halfpence from the costermongers' stalls, and will satisfy the highest expectations of the young people. There are thousands of such homes which have not cost 10s. to get together, and would not realise 5s. if sold, and these afford all of decency and comfort at which their owners aim.

Another, and no less fatal, kind of recklessness is illustrated by the following case:—E. F., a young man already advanced in consumption, marries a crippled girl, incapable of doing anything beyond a little needlework. He had a little business, and was doing fairly well, but shortly after marriage was told that his only chance of life depended upon his passing the next winter in a milder climate. He sold the business, and handed over the greater part of the proceeds to his wife for the support of herself and the child during his absence; but she, resenting the thought of being left, invested the whole amount next day in a "melodeon" (from what I can gather, a large and expensive kind of musical box), and defied him to go and leave her destitute. He did not go, and from that time forward they sank lower and lower, picking up a living in the streets, buying old clothes and selling them again, and supported largely by charity, until he died and left her with two children to bring up as best she may.

What can be expected of lives in which the responsibilities are met in this spirit? You will find the results most manifest in the lower class Board Schools. The troops of ragged, dirty, stunted little urchins, neglected, and crippled in mind and body, that you will see there, are the offspring of these reckless marriages. Follow them home, and you will see the ruined lives of their parents; the mothers are either worn-out drudges before they have reached middle-age, or have developed into the careless slatterns who live on the doorstep gossiping with like-minded neighbours; the fathers, with all self-respect crushed out of them, are reduced to picking up odd jobs at the street-corner, and live more in the public-house than in their wretched homes. When we think, further, what the children brought up in such surroundings must become, this question of improvident marriage shows itself as one of the most serious of modern social life.

One root of the mischief lies in the overcrowding in our large towns. Too often marriage is accepted as the only way of escape from conditions which have become unbearable. Family life, which is carried on in one or two rooms, is bad enough when the family still consists of children; as they grow up to be young men and women it becomes intolerable. Nor is it a simple matter for the young people to be independent, even when they are earning sufficient to support themselves. There are very few amongst the less educated classes who can endure the solitude of living quite alone, even if it were an easier matter than it is to break away from the home-life without some obvious excuse. For girls, moreover, it is hardly desirable; while to young men the prospect of preparing their own meals and doing their own household work is not an attractive one. The same overcrowding which makes family life difficult makes boarding in most cases impossible, and the one solution they have found to the problem is to look round for a more or less suitable companion. How far well-conducted boarding-houses for young men and women may meet the difficulty is an experiment yet to be tried; the great point will be to ensure their being well conducted without making

them too oppressive for natures little wont to discipline and much given to self-indulgence.

Much of the evil is due also to false ideas about life which are not peculiar to the people of whom we are speaking. It is not only in the lower classes that girls are allowed to think, and even made to feel, that a woman's life has no legitimate interests outside those of marriage, and that, therefore, to lose an opportunity of getting married may be to miss all of good which life has to offer. Nor are those who should be the teachers of the young on such important matters wholly without blame; their doctrine that to discourage early marriage is to encourage immorality is a gross injustice to the great majority of the poor—perhaps, if they did but know it, the greatest of which they have as a class to complain at the present day. Evil enough there is, as all know who have much to do with the poor; but those amongst whom these marriages take place are just those who still have a respect for such obligations as they have been taught to recognise, and they are far more likely to sink to a lower level in consequence of their imprudence than they would be in consequence of judicious teaching and warning. As it is, they are acting up to the highest standard which has been set before them, and we have no right to assume that if they are shown one still higher they will not aim at that also. To realise that the people have a capacity for rising as well as falling is the next step towards the Social Utopia in which no one will enter upon the responsibilities of marriage without a fair prospect of being able to bring up a family in decency and comfort.

VII

THE INDUSTRIAL RESIDUUM[1]

By H. DENDY

I AM particularly anxious to make it clear from the first that nothing of what I have to say applies to the class of genuinely self-supporting wage-earners, to those workers whom we may call the true industrials. At every turn of their daily life the two classes meet and influence each other, they are connected by every tie of mutual service and dis-service; to the casual observer their dress, their food, their living accommodation, even their work, is the same in kind if not in quantity. Yet striking right through this superficial resemblance, and reducing to comparative insignificance (for our present purpose) all social and family alliance, we may find a fundamental distinction which can only be intensified by any attempts to obliterate it by artificial means. It is a difference of character and disposition, and it is to this difference of character and its economic results, rather than to any numerical investigation, that I specially wish to draw attention. The qualities which are characteristic of members of the Residuum are not distributed with any reference to money income, and for this reason it is impossible to base a calculation of their numbers upon any estimate of earnings. Moreover, I know of no important general proposition that can be laid down about all the individuals who are in receipt of small incomes, nor about those in receipt of large incomes;

[1] Read at the Economic Club, 10th January 1893, and published in the *Economic Journal* for December 1893.

except, perhaps, that the latter will be more comfortable than the former, and this is only an approximate generalisation. But by taking as a ground of classification some fundamental characteristic of the individual, some disposition or habit which will determine his actions, it may be possible to mark out a development in human nature which will repay study. The most trivial accident of birth or fortune may enable a true member of the Residuum to conceal himself in that section of society which Mr. Giffen characterises as the upper barbarians, or may force a respectable man to take temporary refuge in an East End slum; but while such freaks of fortune would hopelessly disarrange figures, they will in no way affect our knowledge of how the one or the other will be likely to act under given circumstances.

What then are the characteristics of the class? Measured by the economic standard they are rather negative than positive. The ideal economic man, as we know, is remarkable for his foresight and self-control; in the Residuum these qualities are entirely absent. In place of foresight we find the happy faith which never fails, that "something will turn up," and instead of self-control the impulsive recklessness which may lead indifferently to a prodigal generosity, or an almost inconceivable selfishness. The true type of this class lives in the present moment only; not only is he without foresight,—he is almost without memory, in the sense that his past is so completely past that he has no more organised experience to refer to than a child. Hence his life is one incoherent jumble from beginning to end; it would be impossible to make even a connected story out of it, for every day merely repeats the mistakes, the follies and mishaps of yesterday; there is no development in it; all is aimless and drifting.

This description may seem overdrawn, but it is based upon an accumulation of experience to which it is difficult to give tangible form. To fully realise the facts it is necessary to live amongst these people, to see them day after day, watch their extraordinary freaks, and feel the burden of their total irresponsibility. But I should like to

suggest to those who are more familiar with the wealthy section of the Residuum, whether they do not find exactly the same characteristics amongst people whom mere accident of birth has separated from their natural surroundings. There is the same insuperable aversion to steady work, the same self-indulgence, the same eager devotion to trifles and absorption in the interests of the moment. All that they need to complete their likeness to their poorer brethren are the dirty homes and squalid surroundings, and if they were left for only a week to their own exertions there can be little doubt that these also would appear.

This absence of the economic virtues is, of course, only one aspect of a very strongly marked type of character; it accompanies a low order of intellect, and a degradation of the natural affections to something little better than animal instincts. It would take me too long to go far into this matter, but in corroboration of the view I may indicate briefly one or two of the more striking facts which we constantly come across in dealing with these people. Take, for instance, their frequent inability to give the number of the house in which they live, or even the name of the street; when this is combined with their complete ignorance of the points of the compass, and failure to distinguish between the right and left hand, the rational man has dropped very low on the scale towards the sagacious animal, which finds its home easily enough, but has no power of communicating its whereabouts in language.

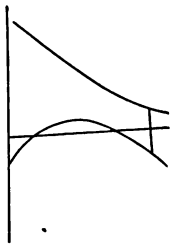
Or take, again, the difficulty they have in giving any coherent account of even quite recent events. A little skill in leading questions will elicit almost any statement you please, and this from no wilful unveracity, but from mere confusion of mind. Interesting evidence might also be gained by a student who had time and patience to investigate their vocabulary; it is limited in the extreme, and their power of expression except by means of gesticulation is proportionately small.

It would be hard to attribute this intellectual failing entirely to absence of anything to express; sometimes, I am convinced, there must be actual suffering from the

inability to give articulate utterance to the mental chaos within. Nevertheless, we are forced to recognise that, on the whole, these people are as undeveloped—or as degraded—on the side of their affections as of their intellect. The most striking proof of this is the looseness of the family tie, and the absence of all feeling of mutual responsibility between parents and children and brothers and sisters. The children drift away as soon as they become self-supporting, sometimes before, and are often completely lost sight of at an age when they most need the affection and care of their parents. It is very unusual to come across a family of this type where several members are not missing, and very common to find an old couple with a large family scattered about in London, but without communication with any of them.

The economic side of this character may perhaps be best illustrated by reference to the curve in which Professor Jevons expresses the basis of his theory of labour; and which I have copied in the diagram. The horizontal line is the neutral line between pleasure and pain; the upper line represents the increase of pleasure derived from an increase of the reward to labour, the lower curve the increase of pain derived from an increase of labour. Now for the theory which it supports, this curve is of interest mainly when approaching the point where pleasure gained is equal to pain endured; the point, therefore, when the labourer begins to question the advisability of continuing. As descriptive of a process it seems to illustrate the mind not so much of the ordinary industrial of to-day, working under ordinary conditions, as of the member of the Residuum. You notice that it assumes a very rapid fall in the final utility of the reward to labour; but in our modern organisation the use of money and the habit of looking to the needs of the future combine to make the final utility of the reward as nearly constant as possible among the working classes. If a man is accumulating money, the final utility will, of course, diminish, and he may in time reach the critical point where his pleasures

and pains balance, and retire from business. But the ordinary wage-earner when he receives his pay on Saturday nights is as far off the critical point as when he goes to work on Monday morning. If the idea of leaving his work does cross his mind, it is banished by the thought of not getting it again when he wants it; the mere possibility of a rise in the final utility of the reward is enough to prevent its falling, and for him the upper curve would be far more true if it were almost a straight line.



But for the member of the Residuum who has no fears for the future the curve represents a constantly recurring process. With his debts cleared off, and a week's wages in hand, the final utility of the reward is so small that he has absolutely no inducement to work; the smallest temptation will keep him away, the smallest inconvenience cause him to throw up the job; and it is not until he is destitute and his credit exhausted, that he finds himself beginning his curve again, to repeat the process as often as he gets the chance. It is, of course, only a question of degree. I suppose it occurs once or twice in every man's life to question whether it is all worth while; but an event which is to the normal man a crisis has become with the Residuum a habit, making little or no impression, and leaving no lesson.

In itself, and apart from any special incapacity, this disposition is not altogether an unfavourable one, even from an economic point of view; and the man to whom the future is merely the infinite possibility of something turning up, is so far in a better position for making his bargain in the labour market than the man who is burdened with all the cares of a lifetime. It is the indifferent seller who gets the best price for his wares; and this may partly account for the high wages which clever good-for-nothings sometimes command when they choose to work. But this point is insignificant in view of the

facts: *first*, that the disposition is in the highest degree unfavourable to the acquirement of skill, and that though sometimes combined with natural genius it is more often allied to incapacity; and *second*, that though the good-for-nothing is indifferent when the question is of continuing a bargain, he rarely approaches one until he finds the necessaries of life running alarmingly short,—until, that is, the claims of the future have become the needs of the present.

From the point of view of happiness there is perhaps more to be said for the disposition. It is difficult to avoid the thought that the facts represented by the curve have possibilities of pleasure about them, which are wanting where the reward of labour has always a fixed and moderate utility; it means an alternation between leisure, excitement, and intense gratification, which might conceivably yield a larger total of happiness than the somewhat low and monotonous level of satisfaction which the regular wage earner gets out of his reward. It must be borne in mind also, that in estimating the happiness of the Residuum we must leave almost entirely out of account all pleasures or pains of anticipation; and if, as I believe, the worst of pain lies in its anticipation, while the best of pleasure is in its realisation, the balance in favour of the disposition in question may tend to become a large one.

Taking this type of character as one of our data, we may now ask about its effect upon the economic position of its possessor. It will be found to result invariably in his permanent failure to maintain himself (and those legally dependent upon him) in that standard of comfort which is considered necessary, and insisted upon by the community. It is, indeed, inevitable that this should be so; want of the economic virtues involves economic failure, and no artificial social arrangements can alter the fact that the man in any rank of life who is not self-supporting is an economic failure. We cannot, however, without some limitations convert the proposition, and say that all who fail to be self-supporting are members of the Residuum.

I have already alluded to those who fall from the ranks of independence through merely temporary misfortune; they owe their failure to the accident of circumstance alone, and not to any inherent defects. It is unfortunately true that long-continued misfortune is only too likely to develop these defects, but until this has taken place there is always hope. There is another class which I should like to exclude, even though their failure to be self-supporting may be more or less permanent. I refer to the large class of women workers, whose earnings have to be supplemented to enable them to live in the standard to which they naturally belong. Their position presents a genuine economic problem, though not quite the one before us now. Looked at from the point of view of exchange, women's labour seems at present to be in the position of what is known as a "by-product"; it shares a joint cost of production with men's labour, but is so much less in requisition that the latter stands in the position of the main product, and receives by far the greater proportion of remuneration. Some of the histories of joint production have been very interesting; for instance that of soda and hydrochloric acid, where the latter, originally a waste product, has, through the new uses discovered for it, taken the lead, and reduced soda to the position of a by-product. It is conceivable that as the most fitting uses are found for women's labour it may advance more nearly to the dignity of being the main product, and thus be able to claim a more equal share of remuneration.

But no such hope can be entertained with regard to the true Residuum; their labour is distinguished by its inferiority alone, and mere inferiority will never find a market; it differs not in kind, but in degree of utility only, and it is inconceivable that a use should be found for it which would not be better supplied by the class from which it has fallen.

Bearing in mind these exceptions—women workers and the subjects of temporary misfortune — the Residuum seems to fall more or less obviously into two divisions, according to the nature of the services rendered. The one

consists of those who follow what, for want of a better name, I will call factitious or superfluous employments; the other of men who possess a limited amount of skill, and supplement regular wage earners in the main industries.

The first class is probably the larger in number (at any rate in poorer London), and the most hopelessly excluded from the true industrial ranks. It is a curious product of modern times, and I doubt whether it has its counterpart in history. It is usually assumed that in proportion as labour lacks skill, it falls back upon brute force, mere strength of muscle; but here we have a race living, and to some extent thriving, who have no specialised skill, no "trade in their hands," as they will say, and who yet have only the minimum of physical strength. A sort of superficial sharpness you may find in some of them, especially those who get their living in the streets; but it is very shallow, and rarely amounts to more than a ready adaptability of manner and a shrewd facility in saying what is expected. If placed in circumstances which are new to them, or which call for any promptness of action or readiness of resource, their incapacity is immediately apparent. Their mission in life is to pick up the odds and ends of work which are let fall through carelessness or indolence by other people, and their one economic virtue is that of being "on the spot." A typical instance of this virtue is found in the protégé of dustmen, who is technically known as the "follower-up." Say that the dustman has to empty six dust-bins on a round, and that his cart will only hold the contents of five and a half; here is the opportunity for the follower-up, who saves him the trouble of returning, and gets so much a barrow-load for his pains.

To the immense multiplication of subsidiary employments which is due to the existence of a Residuum, I need only allude; any one familiar with working London knows them only too well. I do not, of course, refer to the genuine industrial development of subsidiary employment arising from the organisation of labour, but to a multiplication of minor services of very doubtful benefit to the community. Compare the legitimate and natural function

of the milkman, arising from the perishable nature of his commodity, with that of the oil-man, the coal-man, the wood-man, the coke-man, the coster of every description who haunts the streets of working London, and saves his customers the trouble of going to the shop at the corner. It may of course be argued that this is a legitimate and even desirable service, but those who recognise as the type of this class, not the milkman, but the tally-man—that evil genius of the poor—will share my doubts. The whole method of retail industry differs from that pursued in higher classes of the community; there the purchaser sends her orders to the tradesman, here the tradesman takes his goods to the purchaser. It is a difference of the imaginative faculty which well illustrates the disposition of the Residuum; for the educated person anticipating her needs, the sight of the store's list is sufficient to provoke a purchase, but for the uneducated person the sight and touch of the commodities themselves is found to be necessary, and these prove so stimulating that debts are frequently incurred for comparatively useless articles.

Other representatives of the class are the girl who cleans steps, the old woman who minds babies, the knocker-up who will waken you at any hour for 2d. a week, the self-appointed commissionaire who stations himself outside public-houses ready for odd jobs, and so on, with a variety which is to be equalled only by the various forms of indolence which creates the demand for those minor service people. For the most part they are entirely dependent for occupation upon the wage-earners themselves, and it is evident that this limitation of their usefulness renders their mode of life in the highest degree precarious. They are exposed to every breath of "bad times" which excites the smallest desire for economising in their patrons. Many of them are of no real use,—they are even of negative value, for the costermonger who knows his business is as well able to enforce a purchase as the organ-grinder who gets paid to go away. Hence the demand for their services is an unnatural one, and would not make itself felt for a day if it were not artificially fostered. I think it

is Roscher who has urged the necessity of taking into consideration the *intensity* of a demand as well as its extent; if I may apply the term in a somewhat different sense, the demand for these services may be described as having the least degree of intensity which is compatible with its being effective. That it is effective at all is due to the peculiar conditions of supply, which we shall have to note presently. It might be thought that in some degree this lack of intensity might be compensated by extent. I believe that in many of the industries which supply the working classes the comparative stability of demand in face of bad times is to be accounted for by their large numbers, cheap goods for the many forming a safer basis for trading than expensive goods for the few. But members of this class never serve a large connection. Some dozen streets will comprise the ordinary coster's round, the charwoman has her half-dozen patrons, the coal and oil-men have their regular customers, and when these fail them they rarely succeed in establishing a new groove.

As a natural link between this class and the next, I should like to refer, in passing, to the charwoman. In the East End she is called in, like other casual labour, when the mistress of a household is unable or disinclined for any reason to do her own work, and the irregularity of an occupation dependent upon such causes quite defies calculation. She probably had her origin in the West, and is a typical instance of the development and results of partial employment. Under any satisfactory arrangement a household will find within its own internal economy sufficient labour power to carry on its necessary and normal work; but the modern system of intermittent cleaning, by which the dirt is allowed to accumulate until the family goes out of town, makes it possible to work with a smaller regular staff, supplementing it from the Residuum upon occasion. Here the charwoman belongs to the class which supplements the labour of regular wage earners; she is intermittently absorbed into their ranks, and rejected again.

The main body of this class consists almost entirely of inferior workmen, or of men who suffer from an exaggerated

abhorrence of that regular work which is to all of us more or less of a burden. Here we find a certain amount of skill, but it is either insufficiently developed, or else combined with mental or physical defects which neutralise its utility. It is worth while to distinguish between the men who do inferior work and the men who do their work in an inferior manner. Inferior work is generally, if not always, badly paid for, but it is not necessarily subject to any great irregularity; as we have already noticed, the market for cheap goods has elements of stability about it which are wanting in the smaller markets for highly finished commodities.

It is the work of the inferior man which is subject to the worst forms of irregularity, and which serves as a barometer to indicate depressions and elevations in the industrial atmosphere. These are the men who are always falling into work and out again; they are the first to be turned off as work slackens, and the last to be taken on as it improves. It is only when employers are straining to make the most of a favourable turn that they will employ labour which is dear at any price; and frequently the men will anticipate their sentence, and drop away before the actual dismissal is pronounced; they have worked their spell, and are now ready for their interval of leisure.

According to the ordinary laws of competition we should expect to find this class of labour employed at a lower price than the more highly skilled and reliable; and that this is far from being generally the case is a fact which requires explanation. There are several causes at work, the action of Trade Unions to a slight extent, but mainly a combination of public sentiment and private sophistry, which tend to make employers reluctant to offer a lower than a prevailing wage. It is very noticeable in talking to employers, especially among the minor industries, how they nearly always assume a defensive attitude against any suspicion that they are paying less than an equitable wage. They will urge upon your attention that any apparent deficiency is accounted for by short hours or light work, or compensated by some privilege; facts gene-

rally true enough, and deriving their main interest from the proof they afford that an equitable standard is recognised, and that departure from it is not thought to be sufficiently justified by ability to obtain substitutes at the same or a lower rate.

Thus it comes about that inferior workmen will frequently be employed at a rate equal to that of the more skilled in the trade, but the apparent anomaly rights itself in other ways. In piece work, of course, the want of skill tells directly upon the amount of earnings by the smaller quantity of work turned out; but even where the work is by time, the economic laws avenge themselves by the system of partial employment which is creeping into industry. At first sight this would seem to be only an extension of season employment compensated by high wages, such as inevitably occurs in the building trades. But the partial employment of the Residuum exists side by side with regular employment in the same trade, and is a question not of necessity but of convenience. The system is widespread, and may now be found in almost any department of industry. To take an example, it is now quite a common thing for even respectable firms of solicitors, stockbrokers, auctioneers, and so on, to employ a permanent staff insufficient to their needs, relying with perfect confidence on supplementing it from the Residuum when there is a press of work. That is to say, sooner than pay a clerk a comparatively low retaining fee, for the sake of having his services when needed, they will take him on for two or three weeks at a time, giving 30s. to £2 a week, and turn him off again as work slackens, with absolute indifference as to what becomes of him in the interval. All the main manufacturing industries, such as bootmaking and tailoring, and smaller ones, such as fur workers, feather workers, and trimming makers, have the same fringe of inferior men, only partially employed. (The dockers of course are a case in point, but with them the issue has been so confused that I do not venture to bring them into the question.) That this development is greatly to be deprecated in the true interests of labour will, I

suppose, hardly be questioned. If we must chose between two evils, a low regular wage is infinitely more salutary for the average Englishman than high earnings alternating with periods of idleness; and while the original degradation of a labourer to the ranks of the partially employed is generally due to his dislike of persistent work or want of skill, yet it is evident that the system itself tends to intensify the causes which give rise to it,

In my general dislike of partial employment and its results, I feel myself on fairly safe ground. In certain conclusions to which it has led me I am more doubtful, and will therefore put them in the form of questions, to which I hope to get some answers. The first is: So long as employers have open to them the alternative of partial employment, is it not contrary to the true interests of labour (at least of the Residuum) to bring any pressure to bear, whether by means of trade unions, or through public opinion, towards enforcing a minimum rate of wages?

The second question is: Whether any merely local employment agencies, which, without doing anything to break up the immobility of labour, enable employers to find an immediate supply at any moment, do not greatly encourage the system of partial employment, and so directly militate against stability in the relation between employers and employed?

Of course it may be urged that whenever an employer finds a workman through such agencies, a workman finds employment, and so the benefit is mutual. In individual cases that may be so to some extent, but we have to look at the tendency of the system as a whole, and that tendency does seem to be towards irregularity and uncertainty. Moreover, for the Residuum the effect is not altogether good, even in the particular case. A member of this class who feels that there is an institution prepared to reinstate him as soon as he drops out will take little trouble to keep to his work, and will become fixed in the unsettled habits which are his ruin.

When we turn to the question how the supply of this

reserve labour power is produced and maintained, we are met by the difficulty that we have to deal with causes that are not strictly speaking economic. There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that the Residuum is self-supporting in the sense that the standard of comfort in which it lives is determined by its actual earnings, and for this reason it cannot be handled in the same way as other classes of the industrial community.

Professor Sidgwick, in discussing the question whether there can be said to be a normal rate of wages corresponding to the cost of production of labour in any class, considers the doctrine to be most applicable in the case of the worst paid labour of which the supply has to be mainly self-maintained. Here a diminution in wage is thought to act as a check to numbers, and a rise to be followed by an increase. But he points out, also, that the worst paid labour of all is that of classes in towns kept up to a considerable extent by the degradation of members of other classes, and therefore unhappily exempted from the economic necessity of keeping up their own numbers. That is to say, in this class the ordinary economic forces which tend to bring about an equilibrium between the wages of labour and the cost of its maintenance, which in the long run is its cost of production, are counteracted by the invasion from other sources. Thus it comes about that to look for any relation between the cost of production of the Residuum and its economic value is—to borrow an illustration—like looking for the relation between the cost of production of cracked bells and *their* value. Members of the Residuum are all cracked bells; in nine cases out of ten they have cost as much to produce as the self-supporting wage-earner, frequently more. A child of this class will not cost a farthing less to bring up—at any rate, to the age of twelve or fourteen—than the child of the skilled artisan, for what it lacks in proper food and clothing it makes up for in medical attendance and physic, which the Residuum consumes in really startling quantities. Moreover, the degradation into this class is frequently from a standard so high above it as to be practically incommensurable.

What comparison can be made between the education of the professional man and the miserable services he can render when he has fallen into the Residuum? Whether we regard the class as reproducing itself, or as largely supplemented from without, it is in either case guilty of an economic blunder; it fails utterly and entirely to regulate its numbers with any reference to its wage-earning powers.

I am inclined to doubt whether this failure is mainly caused by the invasion of its ranks by degraded members of other classes. This upward and downward movement is always going on, and throughout all grades of the industrial organisation; no class is so self-contained as to form, strictly speaking, a non-competing group. Perhaps the only real difference is that while other classes give and take, the Residuum only takes. Its members cannot fall lower, and it is seldom indeed that they rise higher. Although the industrial organism is very merciful in the way in which it allows a man chance after chance of proving whether there is any stuff in him, it very rarely succeeds in reabsorbing one of this class; the defects of character are practically ineradicable, at any rate under the present system.

But for the great reason why this class fails in economic elasticity, why it fails to give way before the pressure of circumstances, and why therefore the supply continues to be maintained, we must, I believe, look elsewhere. It is to be found in the fact that it is not self-supporting, that its standard of living is in no way determined by itself, but by the sense of the community to which it belongs, and which for many reasons cannot suffer it to fall below a certain level. And if we need evidence that in England this level is far above that to which the Residuum is capable of falling without danger of actual extermination, we need only question immigrants as to their willingness to return to their native lands.

One reason why they are not self-supporting is to be found in the nature of their employment. It is not so much that their earnings are insufficient to live upon, but

that it takes a very high order of intellect to be self-supporting on an intermittent income, and the Residuum is of all classes the least qualified to achieve independence under such conditions.

On the other hand, it is the fact that they are not self-supporting, but are largely subsidised from without, which alone makes it possible for the present system of employment to continue. This, of course, involves us in a vicious circle; but it is characteristic of social problems to be vicious circles, and all that can be done—at any rate on paper—is to point out the links in the chain, and hope that the practical man will some day come along and break through at the weakest place.

One important link we may find in the various sources from which the earnings of this class are subsidised. Of the Poor Law relief and public and private charities (a little within £5,000,000 in London) I need say little here; every one knows more or less accurately that very large sums are distributed among the poorer classes by an expensive machinery, and by far the greater part of this goes to members of the Residuum. Some of them, indeed, the criminal classes, dispense with the machinery, and effect the redistribution for themselves; so far they are less of a burden on the community, but for the most part they are exactly on a level with their weaker brethren; they work occasionally, when they can, and when it is convenient; at other times they help themselves, and live without work.

But large as this recognised subsidy of public and private charity is, I believe it to be unimportant in comparison with the tax levied by the Residuum upon its neighbours. It is very difficult to give any adequate idea of this; it is paid mostly in kind, and comes practically to free board and lodging through a considerable part of the year. So far as concerns free lodging, I can give some actual evidence. I have here a list of twenty-nine families, with a record of their movements during the past three years. During that time two of the families had lived in three houses, eighteen in four houses, seven in five houses,

and two in six houses. Of course there is only one reason for these constant removals; that is, arrears of rent. The amount owing in each instance at the last address varies from 15s. to £4; further back than that it was impossible to get exact information, but it would very rarely be under 20s., and very often over. As an extreme, but by no means an isolated instance, I may cite one which has come under my notice within the last few weeks. Early in 1892 the family took rooms in Holborn, stayed there ten weeks, then left owing £6 for rent; they then took a place in Clerkenwell, stayed there four months, and then moved on into Hoxton, leaving a debt of £7 : 4s. to the landlord; they have been seven weeks at their present address, and already owe over £2, which will certainly never be paid.

It is clear, therefore, that such a list of flittings as I have made represents in itself a large amount of free lodging, quite distinct from the recognised charitable shelters; and I could have increased the list almost indefinitely had it been worth while. The sufferers from this tax are people little better off than the Residuum itself, and the root of the evil lies in the London system of sub-letting large houses. When a working man with a young family takes a house at £30 a year, and heavy rates and taxes, it is ruin to him to let his extra rooms lie empty, and almost equal ruin to get, as he so often does, a member of the Residuum as tenant. Of course the risk is by this time a fully recognised one, and is covered by the heavy rents which paying tenants have to meet, and which sometimes enable a fortunate householder to live rent free.

The same system of sharing a house among several families is largely responsible for the tax that is levied in food. You will find if you try that it is a practical impossibility to drink your tea if there is some one in the next room who has none to drink. Next door makes all the difference. I have known women live for weeks on the friendly scraps let fall from the landlady's table, and a family of children can always make good an extensive claim. Some striking evidence might also be got from the

small general shops which abound in poorer London, if they would only keep books, but they never do. I have no doubt that most of my twenty-nine families have accounts at several shops, of which nothing will be paid until they have exhausted their credit in the neighbourhood, but the shopkeepers themselves are frequently uncertain how much is due to them.

Here is a short statement of the financial position of two representative families.

The first is a man and wife with eight children, the only wage-earner at the time in question being the eldest boy. The liabilities of the family amounted to about £6 borrowed in various amounts from a friend, a mother-in-law, a brother, and a brother-in-law, £3 : 15s. owing for rent, 30s. to the milkman, and an indefinite amount to the provision shop. The family needs for the current week were met by the boy's earnings, 7s., by pawning the father's boots and the son's best clothes, by a continued free supply of milk from the friendly milkman, and of provisions on credit at the rate of half a pound of butter and four half-quartern loaves per day from the general shop.

The second family consisted of man and wife and four children, whose position was simplified by the fact that the landlady kept a general shop. They owed £4 for rent and 23s. for food, and had pawned for £6. Their plan of living was to continue to board and lodge free, the landlady saying that she could not stop them now for fear of losing all they owed; and their only other source of income was an occasional ticket from a neighbouring church.

Now if we take into consideration all these sources, the Poor Law relief, voluntary charity, and the tax levied upon all with whom the Residuum come into immediate contact, we may hesitate to attempt any exact estimate, but we can hardly doubt that the subsidy made towards the support of this class is very large indeed. What are the consequences? The chief, and one which might be most naturally expected, is its almost complete immobility within very narrow limits. No prospect of improvement, not even

a promise of regular work, will induce these people to leave a neighbourhood which they have tried, and not found wanting. They have no confidence in themselves, but they have a confidence fully justified in the social arrangements in which they have been developed, and which for them constitutes what they call Providence. Within certain limits, indeed, their life is a constant flitting, but they merely circulate from street to street within a very narrow area, and the causes of their moving have nothing whatever to do with the labour market. No Act of Settlement ever succeeded in establishing an immobility so rigid as this, for Acts of Settlement have at least the merit of kindling a rebellious desire to move.

It may perhaps be said that three years is not very long to test a man's immobility by, but I think it is sufficient for my purpose if we bear in mind that during those three years he has been subjected to a constantly recurring pressure as great as any that ever is likely to be brought to bear upon him; that each removal represents a small crisis, and is the alternative to—if not the actual result of—a forcible ejectment.

Given this immobility of a class of labour of which the earnings are largely subsidised, we have all the conditions which favour the capricious demand for its services which I have noticed. Employers have no need to make sure that their resources are equal to the demand that may be made upon them, for here is an inexhaustible reservoir maintained outside their doors, upon which they can draw at any moment. And that large section of the Residuum, which without skill or strength serve the caprice rather than the needs of their customers, have no need to strengthen their hold upon industry and make themselves indispensable, for they also know that they have inexhaustible resources upon which to fall back.

I cannot leave the subject without alluding to the question of the influence of this class upon those just above it. So far as concerns the labour market I believe that its power for harm has been exaggerated, and that in the long run it competes with the genuine self-supporting

wage-earners very little, that all questions of wages and hours and employment settle themselves without reference to it. A steady-going efficient workman is never displaced to make room for one of this class, employers know their own interest too well; and it is not until the better supply is exhausted that they have recourse to the Residuum. Like poor land it is only called into use when an increased demand makes it profitable to employ expensive labour, and like poor land it drops out of use again as soon as the demand subsides. And if I may follow the analogy a little further, its utilisation is more likely to accompany an increase than a diminution of the return to the more efficient workers.

With regard, again, to the minor service section of the Residuum, we must note that so far as its services are of any value at all, it is the wage-earners themselves who reap the advantage. It is their substitute for the domestic servant, and without venturing any opinion as to the desirability of such a substitute we may at least point out that it is harmless in that it does not compete with regulars; it serves a class which must choose between it or nothing, which must either do its own work or employ help fitfully as means will allow.

But though, as I think, the Residuum does not injure the position of the wage-earner by competition in the labour market, it is a drag upon it in a more direct way. I have pointed out to how large an extent it is dependent upon credit and charity, and by far the greater part of this credit and charity is derived from the wage class, either directly or by way of high rents and heavy rates. The cost of living is increased to an extent which is probably far from being compensated for by the services actually rendered.

Suppose it possible that by removing the obstacles to the mobility of this class the reservoir of labour could be spread abroad over the country, and gradually reabsorbed into the industrial organism. How would the change make itself felt? In the regular industries there would be less elasticity, less encouragement to season work, more

need of organisation. The fur trade, for instance, instead of dismissing all but the best hands in the winter, and taking on large numbers of inferior workers for a short summer season, would have to increase its regular staff, and in order to keep them employed to equalise its rate of production throughout the year. A similar policy would have to be observed throughout all industry, and it is not impossible that with greater regularity in production there would be fewer commercial crises.

The alternative to dispersion now urged upon us is organisation, but I believe it will prove that the most which organisation can do for the Residuum is to define the hopelessness of its position more sharply. We have had a striking illustration of this in the recent movements of dock labour.

After all is said and done, organisation is only one amongst many means of self-help; it is impossible to organise dead matter from the outside, and the true Residuum is economically dead. It may be possible to galvanise it into a temporary appearance of life, to raise up a social monster that will be the terror of the community; but the best that can really be hoped for it is that it should gradually wear itself away, or in the coming generation be reabsorbed into the industrial life on which it is at present a mere parasite. And the tendency to this issue must probably be delayed by any scheme, however well devised, which seeks to deal with it in the mass and as a permanent institution, or in any way fosters its reluctance to yield to the pressure of circumstance.

VIII

CHARACTER IN ITS BEARING ON SOCIAL CAUSATION[1]

By B. Bosanquet

I HAVE long been oppressed with a growing sense of the inadequacy with which our social reformers conceive the power of character as a material agent. That the more commonplace ecclesiastical mind, both of the oldest and of the newest type, should be blind to ethical realities in their practical daily shape, we have reluctantly accepted as for some high reason a natural necessity. That the fashionably benevolent mind should share this blindness causes no surprise to those who have been called upon to observe that remarkable product of our century. But when able and critically minded men, who have undertaken the duty of scanning our social institutions with an idealist glance, are found to distinguish themselves from the popular ethical materialism only in so far as they push it to the extreme of exaggeration, then our heart would indeed sink within us, if we did not know that there are things which are difficult to see in proportion to their plainness and simplicity. And if we have the smallest sense of humour we may be inclined to smile at our own enthusiasm, remembering how some accidental circumstance, some new association or intense experience, awoke ourselves from the dogmatic slumber which not so very long ago, in the stress perhaps of an absorbing profession,

[1] A lecture given at Essex Hall for the Ethical Society.

we shared with the wicked world, which is now as inattentive to us as we were then to others.

But is not this, at all events in general, the task to which an Ethical Society, as such, must be taken to have pledged itself; the task, I mean, of *learning to see* in the world of ethical realities? And may I not hope to be received with sympathy if not with assent, when I venture to illustrate from one aspect of an urgent social problem—that of the unemployed—a mode of moral perception, in which, if I am right, our ethical movement itself has yet very much to learn?

Not long ago, for example, when it was said by an expert[1] that the normal evil of unemployment was moral rather than economic, objection was taken to this view by one who speaks from the standpoint of the idealist reformer.[2] The antithesis impressed me forcibly, for the reason that recent controversy has largely turned on the relation of ethics to economics, and in the opposition to which I have just referred the disputants *appeared* to have exchanged positions—the expert on the old lines of 1834 desiring to introduce ethics into an economic problem, and the reformer imbued with the current notions of to-day declining to do so. The explanation must be found in a difference of the senses in which the opposite terms are used. I will state it as I understand it. If the ethical and economical views are abstract and opposite onesidednesses, as, for example, in the popular contrast of justice and mercy, or of selfishness and benevolence, that, *I* think, is the sense in which the average reformer of to-day desires to combine them, and in which the expert who adheres to the older lines refuses to do so. But if the ethical point of view is concrete and the economic abstract—if, that is, the ethical view deals with man in his essential completeness as an active being, and the economic view only with some small portion of the influences operative upon him—then the positions are reversed. The reformer of to-day objects to the simpler and more definite

[1] Mr. C. S. Loch, in *Times*, 31st October 1893.
[2] Mr. J. A. M. Macdonald in House of Commons.

causes of action—the "economic" conditions—being overridden by the analysis of more complex influences; while the expert, who is held to be old-fashioned, maintains that if you really want to explain man's behaviour in the concrete, you must take the individual man as a working system of ideas and interests in his full and complex personality, and that is a moral point of view. When we say, in this sense, that the problem is moral rather than economic, we are not to be understood as adopting any vulgar answer to the vulgar question, "Did this man sin, or his parents, or society?" A moral point of view does not to us mean a point of view which holds a question as solved by apportioning blame to the unfortunate; it does mean a point of view which treats men not as economic abstractions, but as living selves with a history and ideas and a character of their own. And to me, at least, the concrete and inclusive point of view is always truly idealist. It seems necessary not to cease reiterating that the ideal is to the material not as less but as more, not an opposite but an inclusion, not a subtraction but an addition.

If we say, then, of any problem which is usually regarded as economic, that it is really and in truth a moral problem, we are only right if we are speaking in the sense which I have indicated. Ethical economics are not to be constructed like Dickens's Chinese metaphysics, by studying the two subjects separately and then combining the information; the phrase can only mean that the rather simple and definite influences which we are accustomed to isolate as the object of economic science, shall have their place in the whole of life criticised and adjusted by a fuller and deeper experience of man's nature and the causes which operate in his action. And this seems the right place to remark what is urged upon us more intensely by observation from year to year, that if economic science is to become ethical or concrete, it must be studied in a manner which as yet has hardly been attempted. As a theory of simple general tendencies, or of causes and consequences within a commercial world where usages were fairly regular, it was adequately conceived in the light of an

imperfect abstract science, a loose mechanics of trade, as meteorology is a loose mechanics of the atmosphere. But if, as seems now to be the case, it aspires to deal not merely with abstract tendencies but with man's behaviour as a whole, and the causes of his good and ill fortune, then it must change its place in the hierarchy of the sciences, and its method must change correspondingly. Figures and formulæ will no longer suffice for its procedure; like the biologist or anthropologist, its votary will have to familiarise himself with the actual phenomena of the life and evolution which he investigates; he will be compelled to approach his problem neither by the empirical observation of the uneducated eye, nor by the purely literary or arithmetical researches of the bookman and statistical student. An ethical economist who has not been in a position to feel the tensions and relaxations of fibre in character, to know the habits and the habitats of daily life among the classes whose evolution, behaviour, and survival he is discussing, is like a physicist without experimental knowledge, a doctor without clinical experience, or a botanist or geologist without practice in the field. I confess, audacious as the statement may seem, that much of the writing of our reforming publicists and economists gives me the impression of the work of students who have not experienced the look and feel and reaction of character in classes other than their own. To them, if I am right, from sheer want of experimental knowledge the effects of character are not a reality. And therefore, for me, their theories and proposals have no more weight or authority than I should attach to the plans of an engineer whom I had detected in not allowing for the difference between the qualities of steel and of wood.

Now I repeat that if an ethical society is anything, it is bound at least to a willingness to consider the operative reality of ethical forces. So subtle, however, is the tendency to substitute material conditions for spiritual reactions, that I do not feel at all sure whether the attention focussed upon social problems by the ethical movement generally, is not in danger of obscuring rather than of emphasising

the ethical reality. We sometimes hear about our relation to the labour movement. Well! from the point of view which I am trying to take, the right and wrong of our attitude wholly depends on the depth and thoroughness of our interpretation. I quite confess that I am uneasy if ever we simply prophesy smooth things, even when I cannot deny them a high degree of truth. It is so easy to say pleasant things, and it is so dangerous; it is so possible that their pleasantness is felt rather than their truth appreciated. (The probability is that our duty will largely consist not indeed in factious opposition to the drift of the time, but in holding up and driving home neglected aspects of truth.) And if I had any rhetoric at command, I would use it in entreating those whom we address to bias themselves habitually in this direction—in the direction of considering most sympathetically those ideas and propositions to which, at first sight, they feel the greatest repugnance. It is not likely that a popular view should be wholly destitute of truth, but all experience shows that it is pretty certain to be highly charged with error.

These ideas force themselves upon us in studying the recent Report of the labour department on "Agencies and Methods for dealing with the Unemployed," 1893; and in watching the progress of the question both within our private knowledge and in the public press. The effects of indiscriminate charity point to similar conceptions, and they are confirmed by the observations of those who are familiar with the Poor Law. This latter system is, and in my personal judgment is rightly, about to be thrown open frankly and directly to democratic control. Many are simply triumphant in the prospect. I do not doubt that after a longer or shorter experience the common sense of our people will assert itself in reasonable habits of administration. But it would be foolish to ignore the risks which attend self-government of this particular kind. No doubt we shall prove equal to the task laid upon us, but only by exerting to the full our courage, our common sense, and our attention to the lessons of experience.

The Report I mentioned just now should be studied by

all who desire to have a concrete knowledge of the "unemployed" problem. To every reader, no doubt, it will suggest different ideas. To me it presents itself as a protracted analysis of character in its material aspects. The agencies which set out to benefit the workman in want of employment are found to operate not merely according to the intentions of their managers, but according to the material which they meet with. The Trade Society, operating upon the trained and reliable mechanic, can deal with want of employment by out-of-work benefit, and can use, as it has every motive to use, the most effective organisation for restoring him to work; and when we read that, in the year 1891, 205 societies expended over £220,000 in out-of-work benefit to their members, we see, just as with the Friendly Societies, the enormous scale of those operations which grow up through the organising power and mutual confidence of large numbers of resolute and foreseeing men. You may say, "But this is their prosperity and not their character." A shallow comment; let us look at them then in adversity. When, under famine conditions, in the cotton scarcity, exceptional measures were taken for the support of regular operatives in large bodies, it was found possible to excite their interest and desire of doing good work under wholly unfamiliar conditions, and considerable engineering enterprises of a skilled kind were executed with benefit both to the employed and to the public. This is not done without much sifting; the less reliable material cannot be applied thus efficiently. Those who would not accept continuous employment drifted away, and ended, no doubt, either in the casual labour class, or in dependence on the Poor Law.

When we turn from agencies which deal with or are formed by the skilled and disciplined ranks of labour, to those which have attempted to assist, under the name of the unemployed, the unfortunate throng whose condition of partial employment does not seriously vary from year to year, we find that the most careful attempts to assist them have been but slightly more successful than the most careless. It is notable throughout the whole Report how no agency

is successful except in as far as it excludes the chronic unemployed. And under the conditions of an ordinary London agitation this has meant that no general agency for helping the unemployed is successful except in as far as it excludes those whose supposed needs have called it into existence. So far as this has not been done, the hopelessness of the material reacts on the agency. Do we all realise that the work provided for the unemployed by London local authorities last winter[1] consisted, for the most part, of three days' employment in the week, given to the same individual men either fortnightly, or in many cases only once or twice throughout the whole season?[2] Or take, again, the Liverpool experiment; the work given "amounted in all to one week's work for about 12 per cent, taken at random, of the men registered as unemployed." It may be said, "But this must be the fault of the local authorities; why do they not organise more adequately?" The local authorities have found out by simple contact that *in so far* as they are asked to take on all applicants, they are not dealing with an industrial class nor with an industrial problem. The class has practically no limit, and the procedure is checked at an arbitrary line. Turn where you will in the Report, the result is the same. The great bulk of those who have been dealt with by general agencies do not possess the industrial character; they and the true industrial class, like oil and water, absolutely refuse to mix, and agencies which have adapted themselves to the one class are by that very fact disqualified for assisting the other. Especially in the continental colony experiments this has become clear; the whole arrangement has nothing to do with any industrial class, and this result is not accidental but plainly inevitable. Note, *e.g.* the effect of introducing high-rate piece-work at Glasgow.[3] You cannot organise what has lost the organic character. Any one who is not convinced of this should study the Abbey Mills experiment made by the Mansion House Conference last year,[4] in which the only hopeful

[1] 1892-93. [2] p. 231. [3] Report, p. 235.
[4] 1892-93.

cases[1] have been subsequently inquired into, with the result that hardly any have been found to have had their position permanently bettered. Out of 716 first applicants some 40 may have been the better for what was done; not at all in the way of relief or test work, but in the way of subsequent assistance, especially emigration, which in no way depended on the work provided. Is not this proportion of effective help to expectation excited a case of burning down your house to roast your pig? And you may take it that no other general experiment was as hopeful as this. I am not speaking, however, of the relief or test work policy as such; I am speaking of the difference of quality in classes of people revealed by the operations of agencies which work either with or for them. And I say that this difference of quality is in the largest sense a difference of character. Those who wish further to pursue the nature of this difference, which is not immediately relative to amount of income, should read a study of the industrial Residuum by a member of this society in the *Economic Journal* for December 1893.[2] This is a piece of work which rests on experience of the kind really needed by the economic student if he seriously intends to make economics a concrete or ethical science.

"But this," it may be urged, "is all familiar; we all know the character of the Residuum in all classes of society—its absence of clear ideas, of looking before or after, of any form of self-control or continuous application. Still, however, the problem is not a moral problem, for the reason that the causes of its existence are physical and economic, and it is to them and not to moral ideas that we must look for the remedy. We know," it will be urged, "that material conditions are not character, but they are the substratum of character; and in their improvement is the only hope. They are the soil in which the plant of character grows."

[1] Between 80 and 90 in all out of 716 first applications, 372 of which were entered into as coming from the class whom it was intended to benefit.

[2] See previous essay.

This conception I think I have fairly represented, and I have great sympathy with it; for my own social work has given me some special knowledge of sanitary conditions, and of questions relating to the dwellings of the poor, while the organisation of industry on the most permanent and least uncertain footing is, we may say, the whole present aim of the true reformer on the economic side. The point of view embodied in these ideas is what we may call the popular modern conception of the relation between matter and spirit, and as against any absolute opposition of them as two worlds it marks an immense advance. But it is not the last word in theory nor a complete method in practice. Let me allude again to the soil and the plant, for it is a suggestive simile. The soil seems so solid and rich, as if the plant could not but draw its life and substance ready and strong from that fertile source. Yet, as we all know, the soil contributes practically nothing to the solid framework of the plant; a few salts, which can be just as well supplied in water, are all that comes from the earth. The growth and solid framework of the plant are drawn from the surrounding atmosphere, and its ability to convert inorganic constituents to its use depends entirely on the organising reaction of its own complete life. Material conditions are necessary to existence; but they are themselves dependent to an enormous extent on the energy of the mind which they surround, and their deficiency, of which there are innumerable degrees, constitutes, in a way which would be incredible but for definite experience, a difficulty, rather than an insuperable obstacle, in the way of good life. It is a striking physical fact that the well-fed and well-cared-for children in our institutional schools are, as experts tell us, apt to suffer in bodily health through lacking that amount of mental struggle or stimulation which is indispensable to physical wellbeing. Right ideas genuinely assimilated are necessary to material welfare; and wrong ideas, or the defect of them, are the most fruitful influences in the production of physical and material wretchedness. Even in sanitary work, and in the work of trained nurses among the poor, the great gain is the

individual education of the people to the importance of sanitary matters, and not the mere momentary unstopping of a drain or cleaning out of a room.

I do not then belittle material conditions or deny that insuperable misfortune may destroy the industrial qualities and drag a man down among the invertebrate Residuum. Still less, in maintaining the main evil to be moral, do I suggest the indolent and vulgar evasion—"It is all their own fault." On the contrary, the fault, I am persuaded, lies in great measure at *our* door; but the suffering—the suffering is *inevitably* theirs.

Do we sufficiently recollect that the ideas which we disseminate in theory and embody in practice form the moral atmosphere of those who have not the opportunity to criticise and to originate for themselves? Have we any concrete imagination of what it means when we read in the Reports from the London districts last winter (1892-93) "a great expectation of employment was aroused," or when 700 applicants are gathered together, of whom about 40 can be effectually aided? Nothing is so pathetic to me as the way in which the very weak poor are moulded and fashioned by the ideas and practices that surround them. There is a talk of employment in the coming winter; some one they know got three days in a whole quarter last winter from the Vestry; it is one more chance among the inscrutable chaos of partial employment and gifts and missions and shelters which surround them; it seems to be the way they are expected and instructed to get on; a Christmas dole at Christmas; three days work in January or February; a free meal from some "good Christian" once a week; jobs at charing for the woman, casual labouring for the man. You can get on from year to year in that way, and if there is to be a little public work now and then provided, apparently by lottery, why, that seems to be part of the whole providential arrangement, and in looking forward to life this huge wheel of chance, this fragmentary dispensation, bulks largely in their view. I know at the present moment of a boy of seventeen who refuses to work. He lives on his mother and his brother. He knows well enough that he

has a fair chance of living without a regular trade, and he apparently does not propose to learn one. How can he but be influenced when he sees the universal claim that "something must be done" for the people who know no trade? A Government Department sends round a circular that work should be found for him which he can do, whatever his previous avocation, and which is not degrading. He cannot suppose that people mean him to fit himself for any industry. He will probably marry shortly; why should he not? They will be taken care of if he does—at least there is a fair chance of it. Others marry at that age, and get on somehow. I am not blaming such as him; no one has told them that every member of a social organism has a function which is the essence of his being, and the whole world, as they see it and as we make it for them, would flatly give the lie to any teacher who should say so. What should we have done if, when we were lads or girls, an idle, parti-coloured loafing life had been open to us, which many of our acquaintance were following not without cheerfulness, and which seemed to constitute a claim on society? The old-fashioned idle fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge partly give the answer. I have heard the opinion expressed by one who should know, that if the lives of sinecurists under that old system were carefully scanned, one would find in them a black record of misery following on idleness. "The difficulty of living by regular work, and the ease of living without it," is, as Mr. Charles Booth says, "the long and short of the matter; not merely because of the immediate attraction of the easier course, but because of the educational influence of such a state of things." I cannot say, of course, what proportion of the Residuum owe their present degradation to the fatal facilities now offered at every turn for embracing a life with no true industrial basis rather than a life depending on definite organisable ability. But of this there is, in my opinion, no reasonable doubt; that the mere spreading of the vague idea that "something must be done" (something, that is, outside the best possible organisation of all useful undertakings, and improvement of the con-

ditions of labour) is in and by itself a potent factor in the creation of the miserable class whose existence we deplore; and all attempts to palliate the mischief by twining ropes of sand in pretending to organise the unorganisable material simply aggravate the disease by furnishing that partial and discontinuous employment which is the poison that corrupts these people's lives.

Time fails me to enter into the process by which foolish charity and a recklessly administered Poor Law co-operate to the same bad end; but I will give one crucial example which may at least furnish food for reflection. In this very hall, almost exactly three years ago to-day, I pointed out the dangers which, in my judgment, attached to the social scheme set out *In Darkest England*, and among other criticisms, I used the words: "The number of the homeless class will simply be increased to meet the places thus opened for their reception." That prediction has, it would seem, been too sadly verified. In a controversy which took place in the winter of 1892-93, Mr. Gaskell, who had been employed by Mr. Francis Peek to report on the social scheme of *In Darkest England*, pointed out that there was grave reason to suppose that the Salvation Army policy was rapidly increasing the number of homeless persons in London.[1] The 4000 persons accommodated by the shelters erected since 1888 are, according to all the evidence, in excess of any homeless class that existed before that date, and have arisen in a time of less pressure and greater common lodging-house accommodation than that preceding the year 1888. Mr. Gaskell's testimony is quite direct that people in the shelters had been attracted by them to London even from the European continent. There is a good deal of ground for supposing that some such number of persons have actually been dragged down by the fatal facilities offered for a homeless life, many of them, be it noted, being persons who, in adopting that life, have deserted their wives and children.

The mischievous effect of expectation is very well

[1] Mr. Gaskell in *Times*, 10th January 1893. See also a letter from Mr. Gaskell, 30th December 1892.

illustrated by the Report[1] of the manager at the branch labour bureau in Auckland, New Zealand, who, out of his own common sense and experience, has come to the conclusion "that it is better to give men information and encourage them to seek work for themselves than to enter their names and lead them to hang around waiting for the bureau to find them work." A bureau, it may be noted, is successful, like other agencies, in as far as it excludes the class whose position creates the problem. If it supplies capable workmen and servants, employers will come to it—if not, not. The Trade Societies' system for finding work, as described in this Report, is full of interest, and it is to it, surely, that we must look for any future solution of the problem.

It is well worth observing that while popular theory is against the view here taken, popular action, being driven on by experience, is to a great extent in its favour. This shows itself in many ways. The very tendency of local boards to press this matter upon the Central Government has, in my judgment, more meanings than one. Experience has taught something to the Boards and their officials, as their Reports very plainly show. They would prefer, after last winter's[2] trial, perhaps, that some one else, but certainly that *not* themselves, should deal with the matter. The labour party has also learned something. In my own district, as I see from the local press,[3] the deputation to the Vestry representing several labour and Liberal associations recognises the evil of including the chronic unemployed among those for whom relief is to be found, condemns the three days' system, and demands that preference should be given to the members of Trade Societies. This demand, whether just or not, indicates the same line which the Report sustains throughout, viz. that no good can be done unless you begin by immense exclusions. I add, however, that it would seem disastrous to adopt any policy which should discourage the Trade Societies from giving out-of-work benefit, or should recognise that a man whose annual income is sufficient, though his

[1] Report, p. 353. [2] The winter of 1892-93.
[3] *West Middlesex Advertiser*, 15th November 1893.

trade is seasonal, is to be maintained in winter at the expense of ratepayers poorer than himself. Employers should equalise employment where they can; but workmen must really try to equalise expenditure, as every man has to do whose income is received at chance intervals.

Again, the organisation of labour is all on the side which I have been emphasising. The net result of organisation at the Docks was in the direction of confining to about 6000 people the work which had previously been partial employment for between 12,000 and 20,000. I take it that in the coal trade an analogous result is likely to occur. All permanent organisation seems to mean the withdrawal of partial and inadequate employment from a certain class. And to this, as I gather, the labour leaders have made up their minds.

Nor is this policy a hopeless one, if it is thoroughly pursued. The Industrial Residuum is not a true self-propagating class; it is a mass of social wreckage, and must necessarily cease to exist, in so far as the causes are arrested which are perpetually renewing it. The error which I impute to popular theory on the subject consists in clinging to the illusion that "something can be done" for this class as such, while it remains such as it is. In all its phases—practical, theoretical, ethical, or religious—this chimera that "something can and must be done" is itself, if I am right, one, though not the only, generating cause of the Residuum, and a condition which intensifies the action of all the other degrading causes. On the contrary, in truth, nothing can be done, so long as we teach by precept and in practice that to fit yourself for a positive function is not the only avenue to life in a civilised community. But on these lines, the lines which I have indicated, very much can be done.

Attention to definite material evils, and the discouragement, so far as possible, of intermittent employment, will prevent many forms of insuperable misfortune or overstrain which now drive marginal cases into the shipwrecked class. More particularly the problem of the London children's life after school age, a strictly moral problem—a question

of the formation of character—is intimately bound up with the crux of chronic "unemployment." I think that our Honorary Secretary has well drawn attention to this most important field of work in some address or lecture to the Society.[1]

But the central point and principle in my belief is this, that we should recognise, and, so far as we can affect the "great sophist" public opinion, should bring it to recognise also, the material force and effective reality which belong to character; in other words, to the operation of ideas in life. We should understand, that is to say (I wish to speak plainly, but I hope not rudely), that if we have been accessory to shaking any one's sense of the duty of forethought, their feeling of parental or filial responsibility, or their conviction that if they are to live they must fit themselves for civilised life, or if we have trained any one to think that the world is a lottery, and that the only rule is to rely on chance or Providence without intelligent prospect or retrospect, then we have done them as real and material and disastrous a mischief as if we had given them phosphorus necrosis in our factory, or poisoned them with sewer-gas, or cheated them of their wages. I have heard of a lad who was morally murdered by benevolent ladies who gave him little casual jobs one after the other, and kept him hanging on and on in expectation till the time and spirit in which he could have fitted himself for an industry had left him and passed by. All of us here probably know enough to execrate such an action as that. But if we issue, or allow to be issued, or approved, indistinct suggestions that somehow some authority is to deal generally with the problem of the unemployed, raising a vague expectation in all who are at the doubtful margin, or who are newly entering on life, that the lottery of casual unskilled employment is to be extended, and the life of the chronic unemployed is therefore to be facilitated, would there not be some justification for a social prophet who should retort our censure upon us, like Nathan upon David, with the condemnation—"Thou art the man"?

[1] See also III. on "The Children of Working London," by H. Dendy.

IX

OLD PENSIONERS

By H. Dendy

Beneath the elm trees on a still autumn day the leaves fall round us on every side. So silent are they that the noise of our feet on the gravel hides the sound of their falling, but we stand still for a few moments, and watch and listen, and the air is full of a dry and gentle rustle as one by one they break the slender bond which attaches them to the tree, and flutter softly to the ground. We look up towards the blue sky, and see them, golden and brown, hovering about us like wavering butterflies, hesitating, turning, caught in some current of air, but always falling, falling, till the ground is strewn. A breath of air brings them down in showers, but it only hastens their end by a few moments; dry and withered, they have no longer any hold upon life, and must go.

In the great towns we have few of Nature's tender parables to remind us of our frailty, but there should need no parable where we may see the human tragedy so directly and overwhelmingly in the lives of our neighbours. They are falling all around us in their thousands every day, dropping silently away from life; but so noiseless is their fall that it is lost in the sound of the daily life of the great city.

It has come in my way within the last few years to see and know many of these fading lives, and I love to let my thoughts linger upon them before they slip away entirely

from our world. They are so gentle, so aloof, so quiet and aimless, that they tempt one aside for a time from the eager hurry of younger life into the autumn which awaits us all.

It is wonderful how completely lost a life may be in the wilderness of. London. Four bare walls only a few feet asunder constitute the world for many of my friends One of these, a tiny old woman, whose eighty years had worn her away to a mere shred, lived, when I first knew her, in a room proportionately small, and seldom ventured out except for a visit to the baker. For sixteen years her life had centred in the little garret, and by degrees, as one friend after another dropped away, as work had to be given up, and shopping became more and more impossible, all her interests shrank within the limits of that narrow space. And so little there to compensate for the loss of the human sympathy and intercourse which was once hers! A narrow bed, with scanty coverings, an old moth-eaten hair trunk, with all the hair worn off, a rickety chest of drawers — these constituted the whole of her worldly properties. It fell to my lot to have to go through the contents of the drawers later on, and a more mournful survey I have never made—not for what was there, but for what was not. One or two old rent-books, a few scraps of former dresses, bits of string, and stray buttons—there was literally nothing else. The one treasure was hidden away under the bed in the old hair trunk, and that one treasure was an ancient white beaver hat. It had once belonged to a brother, and I doubt not had been clung to at first as a relic of past gentility, and had been found too old-fashioned to sell or to pawn when little by little all her other treasures had gradually been parted with to bring the daily bread. That daily bread is purchased at a terrible cost by the old people, and the hunger of to-day is often stayed by the sacrifice of many memories from the past. What they cling to longest are relics which speak of better days, which bear witness to a gentility now faded like themselves. My little friend would dwell proudly on the time, so many

long years ago, when her father was a prosperous dyer in Clerkenwell, and she and her sister had been sent to a "very genteel" school: in evidence whereof she would point to two samplers upon the walls framed as pictures, and representing Bible stories; their once gaudy colours as dim and tarnished as the memories which clung so fondly round them.

The little woman had been reduced to a pitiful plight before help came, before, indeed, any one knew of her distress; she had starved herself to pay her rent, and for rent to be paid with any approach to regularity is in our parts an almost unfailing sign of prosperity. The baker's wife told me how, one cold night, she had staggered into her shop so dazed and faint with hunger that she could not make her wants known. The prompt administration of a glass of wine marked the occasion as a red-letter day which she never forgot, and from that time forward she had "as much bread as she could eat," free of cost. This farinaceous diet was relieved by an occasional cow-heel, bought cheap on Saturdays, which lasted "some days," and which had, we will hope, something of the strengthening effect of calf's-foot jelly.

But the rent had still to be faced, and by the persuasion of landlady and baker she was at last induced to apply to the Guardians. This was a trial to her. "I could not dress nicely to go up there," she lamented, "or they would think I was too well off. I may dress nicely when I come and see you, may I not?" Dressing nicely meant the donning of a clean apron and an old shawl.

We had hoped that brighter days were in store for her. Friends were found to proffer a more sufficient and less irksome aid than that of the Poor Law; the universal panacea of a "pension" was applied. Five and ninepence a week in hard cash became the income of this astonished recipient. "I can't understand why any one takes an interest in me," she reiterated over and over again. But the revulsion from poverty to wealth was too great; her poor little mind, starved and lonely through so many years, gave way under the burden of riches. She could not

credit her own good fortune; the money, she said, was bad; she would not spend it, but hoarded it up like a starving miser; then she refused to take it at all, and finally she became imbecile, and had to be removed to the infirmary. Not even a pension could compensate for the long years of loneliness and neglect, or take the place of the loving care which should surround old age, and without which it may be but cruel kindness to enable the fading life to linger on in its solitude.

So starved a life as this is rare, except in the case of unmarried women of the working class. After their first youth is past, they seem to lose the faculty of making friends, and their scanty education, combined with the drudgery they must go through to earn a living, cuts them off from other interests. Frugal, austere, and lonely, neither giving to nor asking of their fellowmen, they may be found in their solitary garrets throughout the length and breadth of London; they are the nuns of to-day, the great lay-sisterhood of stunted lives. One of the saddest lives I ever came across, and I have known many sad ones, was that of an aged spinster who, at the age of seventy-three, was earning a very scanty living by embroidering wedding veils. She was the daughter of a "bootmaker and dancing-master," had gone on the stage at the early age of three, and had been at work ever since. At one time, when far advanced in years, she had temporarily given way to drink, because she used to come home at night too worn out with work to be able to light the fire and make a cup of tea. A kindly neighbour saved her from the fatal habit by the simple expedient of boiling her kettle for her, and since then her faltering steps have kept the strait path.

The men seldom retire so completely; they have their books or their papers, their pipe or their pet animal, for, contrary to tradition as it may seem, it is more often the man than the woman who keeps a cat or canary. As a contrast to my little old maid I must introduce an old man whose life is still full of interests. He has been a cabinet-maker. Not one of the modern kind who devote their lives to turning out one particular kind of chair or wash-

stand, and when that goes out of fashion can turn to nothing else; but a man of ingenuity and resource. He could design as well as make, and for two years "lived by his pencil,"—that is, by illustrating catalogues. Then technical schools came in; he found himself unable to compete with the work turned out by them, and took to his tools again. As usual with people who take a genuine interest in their work he had many other interests also. His youth was before the days of Board Schools and evening classes, but *Cassell's Popular Educator* was available, and from it he taught himself French, Italian, and Spanish, the elements of algebra and geometry, and a smattering of astronomy and anatomy. His knowledge had made him very humble. "We working-men shall never be properly educated," he once told me regretfully; "it's not so much want of time, but we have not the perseverance to master book-learning." Yet he can carry on a philosophical discussion with an intelligence and accuracy which would put to shame many University men. He is succumbing to gradual paralysis, and takes the keenest interest in watching the progress of the disease from physiological and psychological points of view. But his wife will not let him indulge often in philosophical speculations. "It excites him to talk that stuff," she says; for alas! she does not sympathise in his tastes. He has a treasured library of dusty old books, which she makes him keep out of sight in an ancient chest. He showed me some of these one day: an early edition of Locke's *Essay*, printed in Holland, Silvio Pellico, Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, charts of the heavens and maps of the earth, books of voyages and travels, and Latin Satires—hardly a branch of literature which was not represented in this shabby library, picked up from the bookstalls.

Times were bad with him a few years ago. His children, between whom and himself there is the strongest attachment, have not done so well with their lives as he has; perhaps they lack his energy and resource. Be that how it may, the burden of keeping their parents in addition to their growing families became so great a strain upon

their resources that, at the age of seventy-five, the old man put his pride in his pocket, tucked his wife under his arm, and marched up to the Relief Offices. His sacrifice, however, was not permitted. No sooner were his wants made known than friends and relations came forward, more than willing to help one whom all respected. He now lives in frugal comfort, secure from want, tended by his wife and children, and waiting for the end with quiet interest.

Dame schools seem to belong to so remote an age that one hardly thinks to ask what has become of the dames; but here and there we find them stranded, as completely out of touch with the world of Board Schools as if they had never taken a share in the art of pedagogy. One such I know, gentle and meekly repining she recalls the sixteen years during which she kept her little school as some of the happiest of her life. I can imagine her in her young widowhood (for her husband died four years after they were married) gathering the little ones about her, and teaching them with a mild incapability which was perhaps partly compensated for by the influence upon them of her patience and devotion. Then the school was "taken from her" (probably a Board School was opened near by, for which hers was not allowed as a substitute), and she still weeps a little when she speaks of her loss. Her own children died young, and when she turned for her living to the trade of bookfolding she was quite alone in the world. Nor was there much solace to be found in her work; it is monotonous and badly paid. Moreover, the employers for whom she worked dealt only in bibles and prayer-books, and she thinks people must have got fully supplied with these, for of late years there have been sad "slack times," during which no work was to be had. "The only chance of better times," she says, "would be if the Queen were to die." Not that she is guilty of any disloyalty, or would wish any one to die, however much she might benefit by it; but the fact remains, as a mere matter of business, that if the Queen *were* to die every one *must* have new prayer-books. A new proof, if one were needed, of the inevitable links between high and low.

However, the old lady is happily past any direct dependence upon the fluctuations of trade. Her gentleness and religious devotion have won her many friends; these bestirred themselves about her a few years ago, and contributions from five or six sources were guided together to form a little rivulet of benevolence which will soften her way to the end. She is, however, too sincere to reap all the benefit from her piety, which a less scrupulous person might have derived. One Society to which she applied only grant their benefits after a searching examination into the religious experiences of their applicants. "They wanted me to say the exact date and hour at which I was converted," she moaned; "and perhaps it was very wicked, but I couldn't be sure." So she was ploughed in her examination, and was too simple-minded to find consolation in her moral superiority to her examiners.

Her most devoted friend, who has lived with her for many years, and supplies her with many little comforts, was a fellow-worker. They must have been drawn together by force of contrast, for the friend is as fat and hilarious as the old lady is lean and melancholy; yet she too has had her trials and disappointments. A few years ago she thought her fortune was made, for a brother-in-law, whose wife she had nursed through a long and trying illness, promised to provide for her lifetime. Unfortunately he deferred making settlements, died suddenly, and left her with only disappointed hopes. She returned bravely to her work and to the friend who was to have shared her good fortune, and every day, before trudging away to her prayer-books, she cleans the one room and takes the old lady her cup of tea in bed. In return, she trudges home at night to find a cheerful room, and a tender, if not a cheerful, welcome.

Surely nowhere can such loving care be better bestowed than upon these lonely lives which have outlived their own natural ties. I often think that the tragedy of the stage, where all comes to an end in a climax of woe, has nothing in it half so tragic as this lingering on long after the climax of all joys and sorrows has been reached. One brave

woman I know who has gone through sorrow which would infallibly have broken the heart of a heroine in a drama, but there is no such easy solution to the problems of real life. Her husband, also, died in the early years of their married life, leaving her with one small boy to bring up. On him she centred all her hopes, and resolved to "make a gentleman" of him. With indomitable perseverance and energy she saved money, opened a lodging-house in Devonshire, and actually succeeded in giving the boy a good education. He was placed in a solicitor's office, where his undoubted talent enabled him to make himself a good position. His mother's ambition seemed in a fair way to be realised, when bad companions and an unhappy marriage brought hopeless ruin upon her work. Devoted to the last, she gave up her house in Devonshire to watch over her son in London, while he squandered away her savings and drank himself to death. What could she do with life after that? Yet life had to be maintained, and for some weeks she lived on the proceeds of a set of silver teaspoons—all that was left to remind her of the position she had so bravely earned for herself, and so vainly sacrificed. Then a friendly almshouse opened its doors to her, and there she makes her home, the recipient of an old-world charity, between her visits as an honoured guest to those who have known her past life.

Many more I know, each with his own story, his own memories to look back upon, his own silent hopes for the future, each waiting until the wind shall pass over him, and his place shall know him no more. Let us bear in mind that such as these can no longer make a new life for themselves in this world, and that our care should be to strengthen every tie, however slight, which still connects them with human sympathy, and to guard against the thought, however kindly meant, that five shillings a week can by itself bring comfort into desolate lives.

X

PAUPERISM AND OLD-AGE PENSIONS[1]

By C. S. Loch

Many wide-reaching proposals for social reform are produced and speedily forgotten. They are brought to the light and disappear, a part of that great mountain of old books and blue-books, old magazines and pamphlets, old ledgers and letters, which the nation flings up like a heap of slack and *débris* as it tunnels its way into the future and takes up new aims, hopes, and desires. Some schemes now much discussed, when they have done their work of starting discussion, may be thrown aside into this great national slack heap. Some may survive, or, what to me seems more likely, may serve to modify existing practice, and some one scheme, it is just possible, may be permanently adopted by us, either intact or cut and clipped to suit our needs. The last few years have been prolific in proposals for making some new or better provision for the aged. Whether they will suit the purpose of the nation or not is the problem we have to consider.

Pauperism generally and in reference to Old Age.

Several of these schemes for a provision for the aged have a special importance. If adopted they will introduce a new principle into English administration. Hitherto it

[1] A paper read at the Poor Law Conference for the South Wales District, May 1892. Some elaborate statistical tables are omitted or abridged.

has been thought that the State should not undertake the maintenance of individuals, except in certain extreme cases which it was desired to define and to limit very carefully. Now it is proposed that the whole or part maintenance of a large class of the population should at a certain age be thrown on the community, as a mere matter of course, and without any regard to individual limitations. Between these two principles the divergence is absolute. The old principle tends to the independence of the individual, and reduces his claim on the State for maintenance to a minimum. The new principle tends to his dependence, and gives an ample and probably increasing scope to reliance upon the State. If this principle be accepted—another indication of the special importance of these schemes—there must be an almost entire reconstruction of the Poor Law system. In the face of this divergence, I would ask what counsel we may draw from our social experience, for is not that, after all, the best test? It is not a paper reasoning, in which a phrase may catch the eye and lead the reader he knows not whither. Rather is it a reasoning of a living kind, expressed and proven by the acts of our forefathers and ourselves.

Clearing the Ground—The Poor Law from 1834 *to* 1870.

To understand the true bearings of the new Pension Schemes, we must realise what was that civic warfare which after 1834 had to be fought out in England, a contest between the intelligence and sagacity of the nation and its pauperism. Many read the well-known Report of the Poor Law Commissioners published in 1834, but few take the trouble to study the whole series of subsequent Reports. Some of the statements which have been made in the course of the controversy on old-age pensions seem to me to be conclusive evidence of this. I venture, therefore, to describe very shortly what this civic warfare of the nation has been.

The new Poor Law, it is said, has been tried and found wanting; in a period of comparative prosperity, it has

indeed reduced pauperism, but not twenty unions are managed on lines that would be approved by the Poor Law Commissioners; hence new schemes are absolutely necessary. How far is this true? What has the new Poor Law accomplished?

And first let me put the matter dialogue-wise. I will ask—In a pauperised country what would one expect? Would the proportion of the aged to the whole number of paupers be large or small? "Clearly small," you will answer, "for where those of all ages are pauperised, the old will be in a minority." But in a depauperised country, how will it be? "Clearly, again," you will answer, "the stronger, the younger, and the adult will be free of the rates; the weaker and the older will be the last to regain their liberty." And what would happen when the world awoke to the fact that the weaker and the older remained as paupers; would they not be shocked? Would they not say that it was dreadful that so many old people should be paupers? "Yes," you will surely reply. Then I conclude my dialogue thus:—

All pauperism, all habitual dependence on the State for maintenance, is grievous. Formerly, in the throng of paupers, you did not notice the old. Now the throng is less. The adults, who can the more easily provide for themselves, have gone away. Some groups are left. Widows and children, for instance, the sick and the insane. But naturally the chief group is the aged. This is the group that catches the eye in England now.

The following table shows this clearly. It is a table of ten unions, details of which happen to be forthcoming as early as 1835. In that year, when pauperism was rife, the infirm, in which class the aged would be included, were only a fourth to about a third of the whole. In 1891, when pauperism had been greatly reduced, they formed always more than half and sometimes as much as nearly two-thirds of it.

TABLE No. I.

This table shows the number of paupers on the population in 1835 and 1891, and the percentage of infirm paupers, or not able-bodied, on the total number of paupers in 1835 and 1891.

Union.	Paupers on Population, 1835.	Paupers on Population, 1891.	Infirm Paupers on Total Paupers, 1835.	Not Able-bodied Paupers on Total Paupers, 1891.
			Percentage.	Percentage.
Bishop Stortford . .	1 in 6.3	1 in 16.8	26.5	51.2
Dunmow . . .	,, 4.6	,, 20.8	25.6	56.8
Saffron Walden . .	,, 6.2	,, 17.9	23	64.3
Ware	,, 9.3	,, 23.2	30	59.4
Hertford . . .	,, 13.1	,, 23.4	34.6	56.8
Linton	,, 5.3	,, 13.9	23.7	61.4
Caxton and Arrington .	,, 7.8	,, 17.3	30.3	59.7
Royston . . .	,, 8	,, 23	26.2	59.9
Buntingford . . .	,, 9.8	,, 20.1	30.4	51.2
Chelmsford . . .	,, 9.4	,, 20.3	30	55.6

We now turn to the history of pauperism, making special reference to the relief of the aged. Afterwards we will deal with some of the pension schemes that are now proposed. We hardly realise now what a long business was the reform of the Poor Law; and unless we do, we cannot judge of the question of the dependence of the aged as it comes before us for settlement to-day.

In 1834 pauperism in England and the social and economic confusion that exists in a pauperised community were at their height. Some parishes were grouped for special purposes under Gilbert's and other Acts, but as a rule each parish, large or small, a large Yorkshire parish, a long-shaped Thames-side parish, or a small city parish, formed a separate area of administration. Except where by a local Act, by the Select Vestry Act, or by Gilbert's

Act, a board of supervision had been established, this area was, in practice, under the rule of one or two overseers. These men were often ignorant and ill-educated. Unpaid, they could not give time to the fulfilment of their responsibilities. Appointed for a year at a time only, they could not adopt any fixed policy, but were exposed to the temptations of self-interest, to the desire to get credit by a popular distribution, and to the fear of personal injury in times of emergency or difficulty, if they withstood the demands of idle and persistent relief-seekers. In many parishes were poorhouses, where the people should have been, and to some extent were, "set on work," where they lived in comparative comfort, or rather perhaps in an indolent and untidy profusion. "I have not found," says one inspector, "one single parish where there is a workhouse in which the allowances of food to the indoor paupers are not from 25 to 100 per cent better than that of the honest independent agricultural labourers." In some places the married couples who lived and bred in the poorhouses considered that they had a proprietary right to their rooms. When they went away, it was usual for them at one workhouse to nail them up, as you might turn the key in the hall door when you leave your own house. Elsewhere other abuses prevailed. Relief was for the poor. Poverty was the claim for assistance. The poor were to have relief in a manner that would not be disagreeable to them. The question they asked themselves was not "What are we bound to do for ourselves?" but "What are you—the parish—bound to do for us?" The responsibility of maintenance was transferred from the individual to the parish. The young man the day after his marriage would call with his bride on the overseer, to make petition that he might be put on the relief list, and with the coming children, receive an increasing allowance. A mother looked upon the parish as the natural supporter of her bastard child. She was sure of maintenance for herself and for it from the parish, and from the alleged father, when, as the phrase was, "she had sworn the father." The able-bodied adult looked on the parish as

a paymaster. A part of the year he might be supported by wages, a part on wages and parish pay, and a part on parish pay only, or throughout the year he might be the recipient of both. In any case, the parish was his refuge if he were out of work, or if he feared the uncertainties of employment. Allowances were given to meet alike scarcity of employment, or dearness of bread. The economic position was thus ably summed up. The inquiry of the Poor Law Commissioners had proved that "such allowance, by making the labourer dependent on the parish, and giving him the slave's security against want, whether his labour were bad or good, deteriorated the quality of the labour; secondly, that by this deterioration of labour, the amount of produce, or the fund from which wages as well as profits, rates, and taxes could be repaid, was diminished; thirdly, that the unproductiveness of labour thus caused, diminished the motives to the investment of capital and the employment of labourers in that branch of industry in which allowances in aid were made. In other words, it was demonstrated that the allowance in aid of wages in reality operated as a grievous tax in diminution of them." To remove the adult able-bodied labourer out of this hopeless circle of dependence, want of work, and deterioration was the first desire of the Poor Law Commissioners. The evil was consuming the country. Even in a very well-managed corporation such as Mutford and Lothingland the rates were 5s. a head, but in some parishes, for instance in Suffolk, they mounted up to 40s. per head of the population, and in whole districts there they were as much as 30s. a head. In one or two places, as is well known, they were so high as to exhaust the profits of the soil; to farm it in these circumstances was mere waste of labour, and the land in consequence was left to go out of cultivation. Here and there, for instance at Shrewsbury, there were the wrecks of carefully devised schemes for employing the poor in workshops, all of them alike costly and often very demoralising failures. For the education of the children there was practically no provision. A system of compulsory apprenticeship, ruinous to

the parents' love for the child and the child's regard for the parent, was widely enforced. The insane and the idiotic were shamefully neglected. Medical relief was claimed as a right. The contracts made with medical men for supplying it were made as for the poor generally. "In the pauperised districts the whole mass of the labouring population might be deemed medical paupers." "The surgery of the parish doctor," says one inspector, "is a sort of recognised and permanently established dispensary to all persons of the labouring classes." Outdoor relief of all kinds was the rule. Indoor relief, even the indoor relief of a pampered and slatternly poorhouse, was the exception. And outdoor relief had, besides the defects I have mentioned, one chief demerit; it was frequently given for the payment of rent. Mushroom houses were built for paupers, whose landlords had the double advantage of a very modest investment of capital and a good return of profit for which the parish was the security. Not to go far afield from this town, I note, that in North Wales this practice was nearly universal. In Llanidloes, out of £2000 a year spent on the poor, nearly £800 was spent in paying rents. In Anglesea and part of Carnarvonshire, overseers frequently gave written guarantees, making the parish responsible for the rent of cottages let to the poor.

In this chaos to create some order was the hard and unpopular task which the Poor Law Commissioners had to undertake, surely the work of a generation, which one could not expect to accomplish before the seventies. By degrees, but especially in the first three or four years, the Commissioners formed unions of parishes, usually including in a union a population of from nine or ten to twenty or thirty thousand persons, selecting the parishes for the purpose according to accessibility to a common market town and other similar considerations; and for union management, they established Boards consisting of one or more Guardians elected from each of the combined parishes. Favouritism in rating and in relief was thus avoided in great measure. The clerk and the relieving officer took the place of the overseers in the administration of relief,

and held office on the condition that they were irremovable without the consent of the Poor Law Commissioners. The government of a Board took the place of the personal government of an overseer; independent investigation was made into applications, and clean well-managed workhouses were built or adapted, in which a decent classification of the inmates was possible, and which would serve as a test in the case of the able-bodied. For this, the abolition of able-bodied pauperism, was the chief object of the Commissioners. At first, to give relief in kind instead of in money, acted as a sort of test in many places and reduced outdoor pauperism in some London parishes by a third. Then at first quickly, and afterwards more slowly, by the offer of work only in the Workhouse, or, if necessary, in a time of emergency by the offer of work outside the Workhouse on certain strict conditions, able-bodied pauperism was greatly reduced. An impulse was thus given to the formation of provident habits. In November 1838 it was found that there had been in the year past an increase of more than 50,000 depositors and of above £1,800,000 in deposits in Friendly Societies. The increase was specially marked in rural districts, and many more Friendly Societies and Loan Societies were established. Medical relief was no longer given to the poor but to the pauper. As a result, many independent medical clubs grew up to fill the place that the new Poor Law left free for them. The direct payment of rents by outdoor relief was forbidden. There was a diminution in drink and crime, and a great decrease in bastardy. In times of emergency there was a clearer scope for charitable relief funds; in ordinary times also there was ampler room left for charity and a charitable consideration of the poor. The new system was economical. One workhouse took the place of many small poorhouses. There was less room for contentious lawsuits. There was a great reduction in the amount of relief distributed. In 1836 it appeared that in the past three years there had been a gross saving of £4,000,000, made upon "an expenditure which chiefly operated as a bounty on indolence and improvidence, but

which is now applicable, and of much of it there is distinct evidence that it is actually applied, in the shape of wages, to remunerate productive industry."

The first and chief battle of the Commissioners was, as we have seen, with adult able-bodied pauperism. To attack that with success was to make a reform in other kinds of pauperism possible. But the fight lasted long. The country disliked the centralisation of the new system. First in agricultural districts and then in the north there was opposition and rioting. Sometimes, if the Guardians offered the House, the people applied in large numbers in the hope that they would be able to break the House test and get outdoor relief. Sometimes an employer, as at Todmorden, would disband his employees so that they might on a sudden be all thrown on the parish. Gradually the opposition yielded. From 1839, when the Commissioners made their report on the continuance of the Poor Law Commission, and on some further amendment of the Poor Law, the system itself was secure, though for years after progress was slow. At first it was a difficult matter to meet the pressure of a single severe winter, which now probably would pass with little notice. And after 1836 the bad years came quickly one upon another. Take this short catalogue of them. 1836, distress in the manufacturing districts, especially Coventry and Stoke-on-Trent, also in Spitalfields; 1837, "distinguished by extensive reverses in trade and severe depression in the manufacturing districts"; 1838, "scarcity of food and consequent high prices of provisions"; 1839, severe distress, especially in the Midlands; 1840, "winter unusually long and severe"; 1841, severe and extensive distress, particularly in the cotton districts of Lancashire and Cheshire; 1842, the same distress; 1843 (at last), "a steady demand for labour" and "a mild winter." And 1844 shows a decrease of 20 per cent in able-bodied pauperism; 1845 marks a small, and 1846 a considerable, decrease in pauperism in and out. Then 1847 marks an increase of pauperism again. In 1847 and 1848 there was a rapid growth of vagrancy.

In the next decade we have the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny, and perhaps a reaction to less careful methods of relief was only natural. The reports of the Poor Law Board give less detail; and, in 1855, one of the inspectors, who had seen much service, writes of Norfolk and Suffolk more especially: "I cannot add that I am satisfied with my annual examination of the general result of the administration of relief in my district. With scarcely an exception, the tendency everywhere is to substitute outdoor for indoor relief, whenever the Guardians may legally do so. The exceptions to the prohibitory order, as I have often been compelled to remark, are almost invariably treated as *rules*, outdoor relief *may* be given, *ergo* outdoor relief *should* be given." But it is noted that in Kent there has been no relapse, and the comparative evenness of the figures of pauperism generally would lead one to think that this was the case elsewhere also. A low level had been reached, but it was adhered to.

The year 1861 is described as prosperous and tranquil, but in 1862 and 1863 we come to the Cotton Famine, when the relief of the able-bodied again became the question of pre-eminent importance, and had to be met by a special Act. The year 1865 is recorded as good for trade, and the effects of the Cotton Famine had by that time almost disappeared. In 1866 came the rinderpest, which is said to have caused a loss of over £3,000,000 in cattle; and in the same year came the cholera and a commercial panic. In 1867 there was depression in trade and much want of employment. In 1868 we hear that the money market was still paralysed, and that the means of all classes of the community were straitened. This year and 1869, 1870, and 1871 mark a largely increased pauperism. In 1869 the cotton manufacture was cramped by the high price of cotton; there was scarcity of employment amongst all classes, and especially in the East End of the metropolis. The Workhouse accommodation was often found to be insufficient, and outdoor relief was largely given. Vagrancy increased, and adult able-bodied pauperism, though it never reached the

figures of 1849. Then it stood at 13.2 per thousand of the population. In 1871 it was 7.7. By the end of 1871 able-bodied pauperism at least had been brought under control; that one clear gain won from the long contest may be recorded. Taking, then, the whole span of years from 1834 to 1870, we cannot, as is alleged by others, say that the reform of Poor Law administration was tried in an exceptionally favourable period and had been found wanting. It had, in fact, been carried through in the face of very great and continuous difficulties, and not till after 1870 was it possible to set on foot any policy for the total reduction of outdoor relief even in any single union. Such a perfection of good administration was not even attempted. It was reserved for the period after 1870, when the methods of sound Poor Law administration were more widely, more thoroughly, and, we may add, more humanely and beneficially applied than ever before.

The Care of the Aged Poor, 1834 *to* 1870.

In the care of the aged poor the Poor Law Commissioners did not find the same abuses as in the general administration of relief. They said: "The outdoor relief to the impotent (using that word as comprehending all except the able-bodied and their families) is subject to less abuse. The great source of Poor Law mal-administration is the desire of many of those who regulate the distribution of the parochial fund to extract from it a profit to themselves. The outdoor relief to the able-bodied, and all relief that is administered in the Workhouse, afford ample opportunities for effecting this purpose; but no use can be made of the labour of the aged and sick, and there is little room for jobbing if their pensions are paid in money. Accordingly we find that, even in places distinguished in general by the most wanton parochial profusion, the allowances to the aged and infirm are moderate." In their extracts from the information received of the Commissioners, they appear to go even further, and quote evidence to show that the general inmates of workhouses

are the aged and infirm, "the only fit persons for out-relief," as the index puts it. And it is remarkable that in Mr. Chadwick's recommendations to the Commissioners, upon which it is said that their report was in great part based, there is no reference to the aged at all.[1]

Further, Lord Brougham and others, it is stated in Molesworth's *History of England*, were of opinion that the only cure for the evils of the Poor Law was its abolition, but the Commissioners decided that "it was desirable that provision should still be made for the relief of the infirm, aged, and those who, though willing to work, could not obtain employment." The Commissioners, indeed, were in principle opposed to all outdoor relief — about that there is no doubt. They used these oft-quoted words:—

"The fundamental principle with respect to legal relief is that the condition of the pauper ought to be, on the whole, less eligible than that of the independent labourer; and

"All distribution of relief in money or in food to be spent or consumed by the pauper in his own house, is inconsistent with this principle."

[1] At a meeting of the Statistical Society, not long before his death, the late Sir E. Chadwick said:—

"The common fallacy, now of half a century of duration, on which outdoor relief money is advanced, even if it be by a Sir Roger de Coverley, is this:—'Oh, I know this poor old body well; the least relief we can give her is half a crown in money; if she is sent into the House, it will cost double that.' The large multiplication of half-crowns is overlooked. The late Rev. Thomas Whately, brother of Archbishop Whately, was the ablest local parochial economist that they (the Commissioners of 1834) met with in the course of their local inquiry. He gave as a last text of exhortation—'Do not flinch from shaking off all outdoor relief to the widows and poor bodies. I did it to all in my parish, and by it I doubled the incomes of every one of them.' But how did he double their incomes? It was in this wise. This poor body had a brother, and was a shop-keeper, and he allowed her 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week. She had a son in place who allowed her 1s.; she had a daughter in place who allowed her another 1s. She had also a patron or former employer who added to these contributions. Now the administrative element still unconsidered is this: that among the wage classes all persons have family or friendly connections, and, if any one is a perfectly lone person without any connection whatever, then assuredly a well-regulated Union-house is the best place for him or her for relief, medical as well as other."

From this it is clear how explicit and absolute Mr. Chadwick's views on out-relief really were.

Indoor relief should be the rule, they thought, outdoor relief the exception. Yet they proposed no change of method in regard to the aged poor, though they did propose a change in regard to all the able-bodied, including widows, which, if generally adopted, would soon have very largely reduced old-age pauperism. They disapproved also of out-relief to the partially disabled. But they wished to deal with the worst evil first. Their policy is clearly shown in their subsequent reports.

Thus, in 1835, one objector, whose statement is reported by the Commissioners, says:—

"It tended powerfully to reconcile me to the new system when I ascertained that no restrictions would be imposed on the due exercise of humanity to the sick, the infirm, and aged."

And, in subsequent reports, there are frequent statements of this kind:—

"The aged, sick, and infirm have additional comfort never before contemplated."

And the following marks a still further point of yielding:—

"Having ascertained that an applicant is old, unable to work, of good character, and a fitting object of charity, we," says one witness, "drive no hard bargain with him by the threat of the Workhouse; nor do we insist on food relief out of the House; we rather consult the feeling of the applicant and make him grateful by giving him relief in money; to an old man or woman 2s. 6d. a week, to an old man and his wife 4s. 6d. a week."

In the Fourth Report (1838) are a series of answers to the question:—

"What effect has the change of system produced on the aged, the impotent, and the helpless?"

The answers are such as these:—

"To increase their comforts."

"More contented, being more certain of their allowance."

"Greater care taken of them, and their condition materially improved."

Clearly the Commissioners did not contemplate the

speedy abolition of all outdoor relief, and they seem to have used this fact as a lever to get rid of the most pernicious evil—the outdoor relief of the able-bodied. Next, as stated in the Fifth Report, where the gradual suppression of outdoor relief is discussed, their theory was, that all "partial relief," that is, all relief that enabled a person "to continue in employment with the aid of allowances," was bad. They said:—

"Until appropriate workhouses are completed, and the discretionary powers of relief are narrowed, there will be much difficulty in repressing a form of relief as mischievous as it is illegal, namely, partial relief, or relief not to those who, in the words of the Statute of the 43rd of Elizabeth, have 'no means,' but to those who have 'some means' to maintain them; not to those who are 'not able to work,' but to those who are able to work and who do work. . . . Under the local discretionary powers and the circumstances of want of accommodation in the Workhouse, considerable abuses are still maintained; inferior workmen, or persons only slightly disabled, are allowed such relief as could only be given, according to law on any sound principle of administration, to persons in a state of complete destitution. Able-bodied persons below the age of sixty obtain allowances under the pretence of being above that age. These individuals, and indeed all persons who, receiving partial relief, continue in employment with the aid of allowances, enter into an injurious competition with the independent labourer, and it seems to us, that in justice to the able-bodied labourer, this competition should as far as possible be put an end to."

It is on this view that Mr. Bland-Garland and those who have made the greatest reforms in our day seem to me to have acted. But, as is clear from the further Report of 1839, nothing more was done in this direction. And it remained for those who came after 1870 to enforce what was in its application a new principle.

Since 1870.—*The General Advance.*

In and about 1870 began the modern times of Poor Law administration. Since then some of the most useful Reports of Poor Law Inspectors have been published. The period marks a start in much social legislation. The Education Act, the Trades Union Act, the Act for the appointment of Factory Inspectors, all date from that time. Into Poor Law administration a new energy was thrown.

Test it as you will, and you will find that the progress is enormous. The principles of the Poor Law Commissioners have been adopted very much more completely all over the country. As evidence of this, take first the B returns for 1st January 1891, and select from them the six most pauperised and the six least pauperised counties. The worst are better, the best are advancing.

TABLE No. II.

Statistics of Union Counties.

This table shows (1) the six Union Counties in which, at 1st January 1891, the pauperism was highest; and (2) the six in which at that date the pauperism was lowest, and shows the number of paupers in population 1st January 1870 and 1st January 1890. The figures include paupers of all kinds—able-bodied, not able-bodied, children, lunatics, and vagrants.[1]

	Year.	Paupers on Population.
1. Norfolk	1870	1 in 14.3
	1890	,, 22
2. Dorset	1870	,, 13.4
	1890	,, 22.5
3. Hertford	1870	,, 15
	1890	,, 23.4
4. Hereford	1870	,, 18.1
	1890	,, 21.9
5. Wilts	1870	,, 12.9
	1890	,, 24.3
6. Somerset	1870	,, 14.6
	1890	,, 25.2
1. Lancaster	1870	1 in 27.6
	1890	,, 52.8
2. York, West Riding	1870	,, 32.2
	1890	,, 53.4
3. Durham	1870	,, 29
	1890	,, 47
4. Salop	1870	,, 25.6
	1890	,, 45.6
5. Warwick	1870	,, 26.3
	1890	,, 44.9
6. Chester	1870	,, 31
	1890	,, 45.4

Take next the metropolis, where vast sums have been spent in infirmary accommodation, which would indirectly raise the cost of maintenance, and where the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund has given a powerful impetus to this

[1] For complete tables see *Report of Poor Law Conference for South Wales District*, May 1892.

Table No. III., showing the reduction of *cost* of pauperism per head of the population in the above counties, is omitted, with a few lines of text referring to it.

and other kinds of indoor relief; yet, in spite of all, the pauperism on population and the cost per head have decreased, as the following tables will show.

Table No. IV.

The Metropolis.

This table shows (1) the total number of in- and out-door paupers of all classes relieved on 1st January of each year; (2) the number of paupers on the population; (3) cost of maintenance and outdoor relief; and (4) cost per head on population.

Year.	Total Number of In- and Out-door Paupers of all Classes relieved on Jan. 1.	Number of Paupers on Population.	Cost of In-maintenance and Outdoor Relief.	Cost per Head on Population.	Population.
			£	s. d.	
1860	94,774	1 in 28.7	...	...	2,725,374
1865	105,351	,, 28	544,283	3 8.2	2,950,361
1870	165,840	,, 19.1	811,064	5 1.2	3,176,308
1875	112,783	,, 30.3	702,707	4 1.2	3,427,250
1880	105,998	,, 35	746,132	4 0.2	3,711,517
1885	103,986	,, 38.6	840,152	4 2.1	4,019,361
1890	113,290	,, 38.4	865,931	3 11.7	4,351,738

Take large and populous Unions, picked out almost at random; in almost all there is marked progress, especially in regard to out-door relief—Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Rochdale, Newcastle-on-Tyne, West Derby, Toxteth Park, and Birkenhead.

Take the whole country: since 1871, able-bodied pauperism, both male and female, has, irrespective of growth of population, steadily decreased outside the Workhouse, with but a slight increase of such pauperism in the Workhouse; and "not able-bodied" pauperism outside the Workhouse has also decreased, though within it has somewhat grown, as is natural, since the accommodation in Poor Law infirmaries is so much extended and improved.

TABLE NO. V.

Adult Pauperism in England and Wales.

IN THIS TABLE VAGRANTS, THE INSANE, AND CHILDREN ARE EXCLUDED.[1]

Year.	Indoor.				Outdoor.				Total Able-bodied Males and Females.	Total not Able-bodied Males and Females.	Total Able-bodied and not Able-bodied Males and Females.
	Able-bodied.		Not Able-bodied.		Able-bodied.		Not Able-bodied.				
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.			
1861	7,589	15,813	29,227	21,735	32,654	94,470	101,900	230,673	150,526	383,535	534,061
1871	12,714	16,606	41,579	26,912	44,112	116,407	117,681	265,638	189,839	451,810	641,649
1881	11,152	15,205	53,262	35,058	17,816	66,996	77,281	191,642	111,169	357,243	468,412
1891	13,748	14,086	59,734	38,720	14,924	56,036	77,227	189,517	98,794	365,198	463,992

[1] See *Twentieth Annual Report of the Local Government Board*, pp. 479, 480.

Or put the change in another way. What is the total population saved from pauperism? In 1880 the "mean number" of paupers was fewer than in 1870 by 224,770. This surely represents a very large force added to the host of the self-dependent. And the difference between the "mean numbers" for 1880 and 1890 is 32,813 in favour of the latter year. Were we to multiply our annual gains since 1870 by two, to find the total number of persons saved from pauperism year by year, we should see what inroads good administration has been making in the pauperism of the country.

We come, then, to these general conclusions. The Poor Law Commissioners accepted in principle the abolition of all outdoor relief, and aimed at its gradual suppression. They wished first of all to put a stop to able-bodied pauperism. They foresaw that if outdoor relief were refused to the partially disabled, as well as to the able-bodied, there would be a further great and salutary reduction of pauperism. They did little to push this view, content, in the face of their great difficulties, to win a victory over the pauperism of able-bodied men. They knew the evil that was done by allowance of outdoor relief to able-bodied women, especially widows; but here, too, they did not press their convictions. They left outdoor relief to the aged much as they found it, except that, as a result of the better organisation which they introduced, the aged were better cared for. They took in this matter a line of limited interference, which at the time was generally accepted by the country, and beyond which little effort was made to advance. Lastly, it is only since 1870—a period marked by progress in the whole study and treatment of pauperism—that it has been demonstrated that by the wider application of the principles of the Commissioners old-age pauperism can be gradually eradicated, except in so far as it is the result of sickness, incompetency, or moral defect.

Since 1870.—*The Advance in the Methods of Preventing Old-Age Pauperism.*

To this point we now turn. Until last year very few persons realised how completely old-age pauperism might be prevented at least in country unions. At Bradfield and Brixworth the Guardians had been pushing forward on the lines of the Commissioners in a manner and with results that would, I believe, have surprised even them. How silently these Guardians worked is perhaps shown by the fact that Mr. Fowle, in his excellent book on the Poor Law, published in 1885, makes but little reference to old-age pauperism and none to the administration of these unions.

"At Brixworth, in 1871, so far as we can judge by proportion, almost 56 per cent of those over 60 were paupers, while now (1891) only between 5 or 6 per cent are paupers and would be buried by the parish. And at Bradfield, instead of one in 2.8 or 35.5 per cent of those over 60 being paupers, the paupers over 60 are one in 25.1, or about 4 per cent. It would seem, then, that in country districts it is almost entirely a question of Poor Law administration whether 4 or 56 per cent of the population over 60 are paupers or independent when they die."

"But the 4, 5, or 6 per cent represent really the heritage of pauperism from before the year 1873 in Brixworth and before the year 1871 in Bradfield. To ensure lasting results the good administration must be continuous. At Brixworth four-fifths of the paupers over 60 are 70 years of age and upwards. At Bradfield all but 21 out of 73 persons classed in Mr. Burt's return as 60 years and upwards are over 70. In regard to this union, Mr. Bland-Garland kindly forwarded a return, the figures of which he 'believed must be still influenced by the pauperism of our old bad administration.' In the three years 1888, 1889, 1890, there were, he says, 302 burials.

Of the persons buried, 61 had at one time or another been paupers; or, deducting four lunatics and three who had had medical relief only, 17.8 per cent. In some of the parishes of the Brixworth and Bradfield unions there are no paupers at all, and in some but one or two."

"If the present policy continue, it may be prophesied that at Brixworth and Bradfield pauperism will fall to a minimum, and so far as these unions are concerned, with it will vanish even the shadow of the argument drawn from pauperism returns, in favour of a national insurance scheme."[1]

It would seem that similar results follow from similar administration in town unions, such as St. George-in-the-East and others.[1] How are these results obtained?

First of all, no outdoor relief is given to the able-bodied. I need not explain matters as regards men, but as regards women, especially widows, some explanation is necessary. It was long ago proven that in those unions in which outdoor relief is either withheld from, or very unfrequently granted to, this class, very few find it necessary to take refuge in the Workhouse.[2] At Bradfield the late Mr. Bland-Garland said: "We agreed to offer widows when destitute a refuge in the Workhouse with their children, or, if they preferred it, to take in most of their children and leave them out. This has been the result. We have one widow in, who had been turned out of her house for misconduct, or she would not be there, and 11 children."[3] "Now," continued Mr. Bland-Garland, "the remaining 54 widows and 202 children who declined to go into the Workhouse are far better off than similar widows and children were when they got outdoor relief. As a

[1] *Old-Age Pensions and Pauperism* (p. 22). "An inquiry as to the bearing of the statistics of pauperism, quoted by the Rt. Hon. J. Chamberlain, M.P., and others, in support of a scheme for National Pensions." C. S. Loch, Secretary, London Charity Organisation Society, London. Swan, Sonnenschein, and Co., Paternoster Square (1892), and at the offices of the Society, 15 Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.

[2] *Sixth Report of the Poor Law Commission* (1840), p. 31.

[3] Quoted from Mr. Bland-Garland's speech at the Annual Meeting of the Charity Organisation Society, 23rd April 1891.

matter of course the children of widows in receipt of outdoor relief are brought up as beggars, and pauperised from their infancy, and the pauperism hangs to them. I have no doubt that you may consider that hereditary pauperism. I do not think that we ought to have an hereditary pauperism. The widows, it is very easy to see, are improved. They are free from the incubus of pauperism. They can demand full remuneration for their labour. They could not do that when they were receiving the pauper dole. They only got a pittance then from their employers. Those that require assistance from their relations get it far more readily than they did when they received the pauper dole. I would say from my heart that one of the happiest circumstances of my life is that we refused to give any more outdoor relief to widows, because I see plainly, all over the union, that they are far better off and far happier than ever they were before."

Next, all medical relief is given on loan. This plan was introduced at Bradfield in 1876. In the three years before its introduction, about 700 medical orders a year were given. In 1890 the Guardians gave 24; and all that were applied for, except perhaps one or two, were given.

Lastly, with the reduction in the rates, there has been an increase of private charity. The Poor Law was not intended to be a substitute for charity; as the Commissioners said, it was for charity to deal with exceptional cases. And Mr. Bland-Garland says: "It becomes comparatively easy now for me or any of my fellow-guardians to say to the gentlemen who reside in the parishes where we occasionally find a poor person or couple whom we would rather not bring into the House: 'Well, now, this is a subject for private charity. We recommend you to get your neighbours to contribute to a small pension for life for these people.' We always say what the pension ought to be, in order that it may be sufficient, if possible. We are enabled to add, to give force to the recommendation: 'You know now that you only pay a 5¼d. rate instead of

24½d. Surely you can afford it.' And we find it very effective."[1]

Only two exceptions in favour of outdoor relief are allowed. A widow may have four weeks' outdoor relief after the commencement of her widowhood. And outdoor relief is given in "Temporarily urgent cases arising from sickness or accident."

Thus by the indirect method of a good Poor Law administration old-age pauperism is prevented. If relief is refused to the able-bodied, it will be demanded less and less by the aged. People do not wish to be dependent on public funds, and when they are not tempted by these funds, or led to expect that they may have them, if difficulty arises, they will plan their life accordingly. And what has happened before happens again. Independent sick and other clubs spring up and new ways of providing for the future are adopted, showing how fertile the population is in its resources when its energies are not impaired by the luckless interference of ill-administered relief.[2]

At Bradfield, since the administration has been reformed, in the membership of the Medical Club there has been an increase of 148 per cent, in that of Friendly Societies an increase of 150 per cent.

These facts and results are so unanswerable, that the advocates of national pension schemes are driven to say that the system I have sketched, good as it is, is not capable of application elsewhere. The unions neighbouring on unions so well-managed do not, Mr. Charles Booth says, reform themselves, but "are, on the whole, what is called 'badly administered,' and apparently full of poverty," and they have full workhouses, while those at Bradfield and Brixworth are empty. This kind of assertion is common, but it is never supported by evidence. I have had the curiosity to test it, and have worked out figures since

[1] I should add that at Bradfield there was no system of Organised Charity. That system is an aid, but the absence of it should not deprive a union of the enormous benefit of dispauperisation, resulting from sound Poor Law administration.

[2] *Second Report of the Poor Law Commissioners* (1835), p. 184.

1870, showing the percentage of pauperism to population, outdoor relief to total pauperism, and able-bodied outdoor relief to total pauperism in 17 unions in the neighbourhood of Bradfield and Brixworth.

In almost all these unions[1] there is a marked advance. Outdoor relief is much less, and the total pauperism is much less in the last 10 and 20 years. Further, able-bodied outdoor pauperism, both male and female, is going down very remarkably in most of the unions; thus, at Newbury in 1870, the figures for these two classes were 100 and 179 in 1870, in 1890 they were 7 and 36. At Northampton they were, in 1870, 109 and 163; in 1890, 13 and 111. Further, able-bodied pauperism and outdoor relief generally form a lesser part of the total pauperism of the unions. Clearly, then, in many ways the influence of good administration in one spot is spreading to other places, and—the reverse of what is alleged—other places, as the new ideas reach them, are less "full of poverty"; and we have now Poor Law Conferences and many means of propagandism formerly wanting.

But the statement that, while Bradfield and Brixworth have empty workhouses, those in the neighbouring unions are full, is most extraordinary. The following table[2] shows the accommodation in each workhouse, how far it is full, and how far it is set apart and used for sick cases. It is evident that the workhouses in the neighbouring unions are generally comparatively empty, especially if deduction be made for the sick.

[1] For statistical tables see original report of this paper in *Poor Law Conference Reports.*

[2] See following page.

Table No. VI.

Accommodation in the Workhouses in Unions neighbouring on the Bradfield and Brixworth Unions, with the number of inmates.

Union.	Total Accommodation in Workhouse Available.*	Total Number in Receipt of Indoor Relief.†	Beds Available for the Sick. ‡	Average Daily Number occupying Beds, Nov. 1890.
Newbury . .	260	251§	80¶	71
Wantage . .	330	98	28	20
Wallingford . .	382	157	58	39
Bradfield . .	400	120	94¶	19
Reading . .	300	529§	169	130
Henley . . .	224	91	53	17
Basingstoke . .	426	204	54	47
Northampton . .	347	283	152	75
Daventry . .	230	94	34	14
Brixworth . .	256	93	28	5
Wellingborough .	330	140	57¶	45
Kettering . .	202	137	36	35
Market Harborough	200	109	43	10
Lutterworth . .	200	39	17¶	10
Rugby . . .	165	104	38	26

* These figures are taken from the *Local Government Directory*, 1891.

† These figures are taken from the B return, 1st January 1891. These figures include the able-bodied and the not able-bodied and their children, and also lunatics, insane persons, and idiots.

‡ These figures are taken from Mr. Rathbone's return, 24th July 1891, "showing in respect of each Workhouse, Workhouse Infirmary, and Sick Asylum in England and Wales the number of the beds in the wards for the sick; the average number of sick persons occupying those wards during the months of September, October, November in the present year (1890); the number of paid officers acting as nurses; the number of such officers who, prior to their appointment by the Guardians or managers, had received any training in nursing."

§ With regard to Newbury, I learn that on the 1st January 1891 an altogether unusual number of persons were in the House. Great cold prevailed, with the result that there were 251 inmates, of whom 36 were children of able-bodied paupers, 45 of not able-bodied. The figures of 1st January 1892 were normal. They were 188, including 52 children, of whom only 9 or 10 were children of able-bodied parents.

At Reading there is, besides the Workhouse, a district school. This accounts in part for the discrepancy between the accommodation in the Workhouse (300) and the total number in receipt of indoor relief (529). The population of Reading has increased nearly 50 per cent in the last decade, but its workhouse accommodation remains what it was. Thus:—

We conclude, then, that by following out the line of Poor Law administration, sketched by the Poor Law Commissioners, the people at all ages of life may by degrees become independent of poor relief, except in so far as sickness, incapacity, or moral defects make their rise out of pauperism impossible. We conclude further that the method by which a general advance in Poor Law administration has always in the past been attained—namely, by the gradual adoption of successful modes of administration which were in the first instance tried and found efficacious in one or two unions only, will be, and indeed is now being, followed elsewhere. What Bradfield, St. George-in-the-East, and other unions are doing will be generally imitated, unless some abrupt change in the policy of the nation in regard to pauperism be introduced.

	Population.	Able-bodied and Children.	Not Able-bodied and Children.	Lunatics, Insane, etc.	Total in Receipt of Indoor Relief.	Percentage on Population.
1st January 1881 .	43,494	142	275	22	439	1 per cent
1st January 1891 .	60,054	85	397	47	529	.8 per cent

In the first week of January 1891 about 153 children were in the district schools, and 16 persons belonging to the Reading Union were in the Henley Workhouse.

A correspondent writes: "The heading 'lunatics, etc.,' of course does not include the lunatics at the asylum, of which there were 78 in 1881 and 104 in 1891. I think you should notice that the increase of 'not able-bodied and children' is due, in a great measure, to the present policy of the Board in sending the children of widows to the district school instead of giving outdoor relief in such cases, thereby lessening the outdoor list, which shows a decrease from 1019 in 1881 to 395 in 1891, and at the present time is only 89; and I may safely say that under the present Board the tendency will be downwards rather than upwards.

"Respecting the accommodation at the Workhouse, through the increase in the area of the borough and the consequent addition to the number of indoor paupers transferred from Wokingham Union, the House became full above its recognised available accommodation, and the Local Government Board directed the Reading Board of Guardians to enlarge the Workhouse. This matter has been taken in hand, a new infirmary built (which will be occupied very shortly) and the House generally enlarged.

"The number of inmates to be accommodated when these changes have been completed I cannot say, but I should think there will be room for about 200 more than at present, as it is intended to provide for the harmless lunatics now at the asylum, and also to provide rooms for married couples, as we have several aged couples now on the relief list (outdoor) who would be better in the House.

"On the 1st January 1891 the accommodation in the House was exactly the same as before.

"The accommodation at the district school at Wargrave is for 160 for Reading and the remainder for Wokingham."

¶ Separate Workhouse Infirmary.

We have come to these conclusions before considering any of the National Insurance Schemes. And I think rightly so, for (to revert to our original questions) we have seen that the new Poor Law has not been tried and found wanting. The statement that in a period of comparative prosperity it has indeed reduced pauperism, but that not 20 unions are managed on lines that would have been approved by the Poor Law Commissioners, is, we have seen, incorrect and misleading. And we have on this and other grounds concluded that no new scheme is, as alleged, absolutely necessary.

The Insurance and Endowment Schemes.

On the 1st August 1890—for it is necessary to refer to this now well-known return—a census was made of persons over 60 who were in receipt of Poor Law relief. It showed that there were in receipt of indoor relief 68,124 persons over 60, in receipt of outdoor relief 218,743 persons, or, if 65 be taken as the limit, the numbers in and out were 54,752 and 190,935. The larger number were women. Thus, of the total over 60, namely 286,867, 102,563 were men, 184,304 were women. The total pauperism of the country, in and out, on the 1st January 1891, was 780,631. Of that number, 336,639 were children under 16, vagrants, and insane. Deducting these, we have: Able-bodied paupers, 98,794, and not able-bodied paupers, 364,198—in all, 342,998, of whom 245,687 are over 65. Clearly, then, the chief part of our adult pauperism is, at any given time, old-age pauperism. This is, as we have seen, what might have been expected. As adult able-bodied pauperism was reduced, old-age pauperism would become prominent. Besides, with age strength diminishes, and, children apart, if there be pauperism at all, the aged rather than the adult would naturally be in receipt of poor relief.

Now for a few words of analysis.

1. The larger number of these paupers over 60 are in receipt of outdoor relief. It is certain that with careful

administration the pauperism of the greater number of such persons may in future be prevented. Experience has shown this.

2. A large part of these people are women. If the pauperism of able-bodied adult women, especially widows, were prevented, as it can be without much difficulty, the beginning of very much of the pauperism of women in old age would be stopped.

3. A large number of those over 60 or 65 years of age who are in receipt of poor relief are senile, sick, or unable to look after themselves at home. In a Poor Law return, published in August 1870, it appeared that on a single day in the previous December the number of persons over 60 in receipt of sick relief was over 51,000. We have done much since then to provide the best of infirmary accommodation, and we have grown very lenient in granting medical relief, and it is likely now that the number is much greater.

4. Lastly, the question should be considered in relation to the date of chargeability. We take a census on a single day, and find accumulated a drift of old-age pauperism. But we are apt to forget that it is a drift. It has come bit by bit down the stream, till it reaches our bar—the census day. Go up stream and you will find no such accumulation. Bit by bit at intervals the driftwood is coming down. There are more as we get close to the bar; fewer at a little way off. If you could take the bits out higher up, our bar would show but little accumulation. When, then, do we ask, have these people become chargeable? We have no return to show; and unfortunately the further elaborate return which the Local Government Board are asking Guardians to send in, will not include this information. Mr. Charles Booth has given the year of chargeability of paupers at Stepney in April 1889. I have worked from this very useful statement.

At Stepney there were on the books in April 1889, 1194 persons. Of these, 281 were children under 16, 297 were persons of from 17 to 49 years of age, 610 were 50 and upwards; in six no age was given. Of the 610,

400 were over 65. Of these 181 were chargeable before the age of 65, and only 219 after that age. Apply this proportion to Mr. Burt's return, and of those who, being 65 and more, are in receipt of relief, viz.—245,687, all but 134,513 would have been chargeable before their sixty-fifth year.[1]

We have, then, this conclusion: granted that there is much old-age pauperism, very much of it, unless it be due to sickness, incapacity, or moral defect, can be prevented, but in any case, all but a little more than half of it commences before the age at which any of the proposed pension schemes would take effect.

I have said nothing yet about sickness, incapacity, and moral defect in regard to the aged. Accordingly, I give an analysis of the 219 cases that became chargeable at 65 or upwards.

Cases.	Cause stated to be the Main Cause of Pauperism.
123	Old age.
17	Drink.
2	Vice.
1	Mental disorder.
76	Sickness.
219	

[1] Taking cases of persons at 50 years old and upwards, and excluding cases in which drink or vice are set down as the main cause of pauperism, I find the figures to be :—

Age of Chargeability.	
30 to 35	2
35 to 40	4
40 to 45	12
45 to 50	21
50 to 55	70
55 to 60	90
60 to 65	122
65 to 70	113
70 to 75	52
75 to 80	21
80 to 85	6
Total	513

From this it will be seen that chargeability is greater between 60 and 65 than between 65 and 70, and than between 55 and 60, and 50 and 55.

From this it appears that of those who were chargeable at 65 or afterwards, viz. 219, only 54 per cent, or rather more than half, were paupers mainly on account of their old age. And if we take the total number of paupers at Stepney, viz. 1194, of this number only 123, becoming chargeable at 65 or later, were paupers chiefly because of their age. Old-age pauperism, pure and simple, after 65, is evidently, then, a much smaller factor than it is usually imagined to be. If the Stepney proportion (123 out of 400) holds good generally, 75,000 would approximately represent the number throughout the country of those who become chargeable at 65 or afterwards, and whose chargeability is mainly due to old age. This comes to about 5 per cent of the total population over 65.

From this it will be seen that the number of people who at 65 or afterwards become paupers owing to old age without serious contributory causes is comparatively small.

But even this conclusion is too favourable. In the 123 cases in which old age was a main cause of pauperism are found among contributory causes, sometimes overlapping, 16 drink, 2 vice, 3 extravagance, 3 temper, 3 incapacity. Of the 123, 30 have 1 or more pauper relatives, 5 have 3 or more. Thus a final sifting shows that in a well-administered town union the cases of those who are chargeable at 65 or later, and who would avoid pauperism if there were a pension scheme for them at that age, are comparatively few. We need not, then, be so alarmed at the figures as some have been. They show ground for reform on the lines of the best modern administration of the Poor Law, but none whatever for a change of system.

The Schemes—Mr. Charles Booth's Scheme.

I will refer to two schemes only, Mr. Booth's scheme and Mr. Chamberlain's scheme.

Mr. Booth's scheme is this. Every inhabitant of the British Isles, on reaching the age of 65, is to receive as a right the sum of 5s. a week until his death, unless he or she have, in the ten years before that age, been in receipt

of Poor Law relief or have been convicted of crime. In order to get this pension, the claimant would personally appear before the superintendent registrar and state what he believed to be his age and where he had passed his life, and he would, in particular, give the actual addresses at which he had lived for the last ten years. He would also give the names of two or three respectable persons who might be willing to speak to his credibility and the probable truth of his statement, and he would be cross-examined. A moderate fee for this inquiry would be stopped out of his pension. The system would be maintained by vote from year to year. There would be no "inalienable right" to a pension. Yet the plan is to be taken as a final settlement. The age 65, it is said, represents the true mean between a natural dependence on others and the ability to earn one's own living. The cost would be about £17,000,000 for England and Wales. We now spend £8,500,000 on poor relief. The aged are taken as a third of the paupers in the country; and out of our Poor Law expenditure, therefore, about £2,800,000 might be saved. There is to be gradually a practical abolition of all outdoor relief. This may lead to a further saving. But we have to estimate for the expenditure of £17,000,000 a year. It is assumed that taxation can be arranged to fall in true proportion to income; and it is stated that those who have a family income of about £150 a year shared by four or five persons, young and old, would be on the middle line, paying out in taxation as much as they would subsequently receive in benefit. Those who are in "a fair working class position" are to pay less and to receive the difference from the middle and wealthy class; and for the quite poor (family income £50 or less) all but a fourth is to be so provided. The middle and more or less wealthy class are to pay for their own five-shilling pension and make good what is deficient in the payments of all other classes. To provide for those who are in need of a pension before 65 a bridge must be built; this is to be the duty of Insurance, Friendly Societies, and others. To prevent application to the Poor Law in case of sickness

we are to have a hospital system organised under the sanitary authorities, with a small charge for patients and provident payments. Those who do not become "free of the hospital" are to be paid for by the parish. All will receive the pension, or be entitled to it, therefore no one will be under any sense of pauperism: dependence on the State will thus lose its disgrace. "He who has wants more:" therefore the promised pension will provoke to thrift. Fear of destitution plays no important part in the development of thrift. Enterprise is the most potent cause of saving; the next motive is to provide for one's children, but this is secondary with the poor. With them the most irresistible incentive is "a prolonged experience of comfort." Filial duty may be shown in many ways besides the supporting of father or mother. The present system, by which the young have to support the old, leads to recklessness.

Now to run over some points in this statement.

There is not, as is alleged, any finality to the scheme. As we have seen, of the paupers over 65, most probably about 46 per cent become paupers before that age. If the scheme were adopted, what would be so natural as, out of a sense of justice, to press for the inclusion of paupers from the age of 60? But then the cost! The £17,000,000 would become nearly £25,000,000; and no one dares face so large an expenditure. There is, in fact, no principle in sticking at the age of 65.

The Insurance Societies, the Friendly Societies, and others are to make a bridge till the sixty-fifth year is reached. This bridge must be a strong one, so strong that if it be built, the difficulties after 65 may be set aside, for they will probably disappear, when provision up to 65 is thus provided. As we have seen, if the Stepney figures hold good generally, only 134,513 persons would be chargeable at or after the age of 65—134,513 out of about 1,323,000 persons—the total population over 65. And this number is reckoned so as to include all paupers over 65 whose pauperism is due to sickness, incapacity, or moral defect.

To prevent the pauperisation of, or rather to endow as State dependents, so small a number of those over 65, is all this large expenditure desirable, especially as we must have the bridge up to 65 in any case? And then, if we make the bridge, we most probably can do without any "endowment" at all.

Next, the £17,000,000 is to be levied in such a way as to fall in true proportion to income. Let us set this out. I take Mr. Giffen's rough estimate.[1]

1883.	Great Britain. Persons. Millions.	England and Wales. Income in Millions. Agricultural.	Non-agricultural.	Total.
Income Tax Incomes	1.4	£90	£486	£576
Upper and middle classes, below Income Tax . .	1.5	£23	£84	£107
Manual Labour class .	11.6	£70	£445	£515
Total . . .	14.5	£183	£1015	£1198

The total national income is put at about £1,000,000,000. This rough estimate of Mr. Giffen's is rather larger. Suppose we follow it. Then of the required £17,000,000 Class I., the income tax-payers, would pay about £8,100,000. The middle class, the £150 people, who would pay for themselves, would pay about £1,500,000. From the manual labour class £2,600,000 may be levied, of which artisans (about 5/11ths of the whole number) may pay half, and the remainder, as labourers, a fourth of the amount of their future pensions.

To make up the balance of the needful £17,000,000, a further sum of about £4,500,000 must also be demanded of income tax-payers, whose total contribution

[1] *Journal of the Statistics Society*, p. 63, vol. xlix., 1886.

will thus amount to over £12,000,000 a year, levied for the benefit of the manual labour class and quite poor. We have thus (bar a small reduction which may be taken as set aside for their own old age) a wholesome transference of over £12,000,000 from the richer class to the poorer for maintenance. We have yet to learn that a transfer of this kind does not ruin and pauperise the receivers. Only those who adopt a socialistic view of society and hope that the State instead of private individuals will become the general fund-holder, would find such a reform satisfactory; to them it would be a stepping-stone to a completer division. To others it would hardly appear to give (as Mr. Booth calls it) "a security of position which will stimulate rather than weaken the play of individuality on which progress and prosperity depend."

Next the proposal would lead to a repeal of the section of the Act of Queen Elizabeth that requires children to support their parents, though the reverse obligation would still apparently remain: parents would have to support their children. The Poor Law Commissioners speak in no over-stern way of the former duty; they would apparently trust rather to the personal feeling of obligation than any legal enactment. But a moral feeling may, like a limb of the body, lose its force and even its existence by gradual desuetude. What we keep healthy, we use constantly. The obligations of child to father, if treated as a kind of luxury—not to be expressed in payment for maintenance, but in works of kindly supererogation—may in time lose their potency altogether. Perhaps, if it were found necessary to keep family affection alive as a kind of indispensable salt of humanity, we might, as in old Poor Law days, come back to the payment of bounties for it. I would submit a proposal for a large expenditure from the public purse on the lines of the following bill incurred at Yattendon by the overseers of the poor about the year 1834:—

	s.	*d.*
To Elizabeth W., a present for her kindness to her father	5	0
To Lucy A., for looking after her mother when ill . .	3	6
To Mary B., for sitting up at nights with her father .	2	0

"The overseer's wife, herself a mother it is stated, saw nothing wrong in this; as for children to be dutiful to their old and sick parents was a great hindrance."[1]

Here we shall have a further anomaly also: family affection up to the age of 65 will be necessary for bridge-making purposes; therefore, the Act of Queen Elizabeth must not be modified within that limit. But after 65 it will no longer be necessary. Therefore after 65 the child will not be required to maintain his parent. Then, again, the transference by taxation of £10,000,000 per annum from one class to another for maintenance, is said to be in no way injurious. Will not the money be spent in articles of consumption, it is said? Will it not be used to give employment when transferred, as much as it might have done if not transferred? No economic harm will be done, and a great bounty will be given. Rather, I should say, a great and ruinous economic mischief will be wrought and a most fatal bounty will be given. The money is now in the hands of those who, whatever their faults, are in the main desirous of turning their possession of it to the best economic account. It is money *plus* a certain intelligent energy in the holder, and, transferred in a natural manner to others in payment for labour done, it is no less when thus transferred, the wage of intelligent energy in the receiver. But take it away from the one class by the compulsion of taxation, and hand it to the other for maintenance, and, so far as it is a force for good and progress, you devitalise it. £12,000,000 less a year will be invested in trade by those who, as holders, have most interest in investing it well. £12,000,000 more a year will go to a single class, not as the result of their energy but simply as a bonus, and also under conditions which require neither directly nor indirectly any return for it in service rendered.

Two arguments are used to controvert this. It is said that the State is our great Labour master, and that after all the labourer may expect from it his compensations for

[1] Extract from Mr. Edward Gulson's report, *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners*, p. 185.

a hard life. But this is a very false analogy. We, most of us, however much we care for social progress, do not, indeed cannot, labour for the State, as employees. We labour for ourselves; and out of what we earn, and often out of our time, we give a quota to the State for the common purposes of the community. We gain no claim to compensation or maintenance by the State on the ground that we do not receive sufficient profit or advantage from the labour of our hands. We do not pay taxes for our own maintenance or for the maintenance of any class in the community, but out of what we earn for our maintenance we pay taxes for common advantages. In a Socialist community the State would be the Labour master —not elsewhere.

The other argument is that the prospect of the five-shilling pension will so act as an incentive to thrift and well-doing that the objections to it may be set aside. Public servants who have the prospect of a pension are, it is said, among the most thrifty and careful people in the country: the "five-shilling" pension will produce a similar thrift in the labouring classes. But the prospective five shillings at 65 is altogether unlike a pension. It begins abnormally late. It is, most would think, very small. It is not in any sense deferred wages, as is the pension in the case of public officials. Still, it is said, "He who has wants more." This in a degree is true. But it is doubtful if he who may be about to have wants more. And, as I say, it is only in a degree true. He who has earned what he has, wants to earn more. But, so far as we have analogies, the having by way of gift, altogether irrespective of work done or to be done, a gift without responsibilities is no stimulus to energy. To be entitled, as the inhabitants of some town, or the member of a certain family, to a fixed sum from an endowed charity has not been found to prove a motive for industry, but the reverse. And in these taxation doles of five shillings there is no single element that fosters good feeling and gives life to the gift. Charity there is not, nor the reward of wages. There may be in them, some may think, a rough social justice; for he that has is obliged to

give to him that has not. And if the gift of £12,000,000 could be shown to remove pauperism and make poverty content, I suppose all would say, that for so great an object it should be given. But all our experience goes to show that such wholesale giving leads not to happiness, but to misery, discontent, and social confusion. Of pauperism, as I have pointed out, there will be, so far as this scheme goes, as much, or nearly as much, as ever; and poverty will have learnt, as even yet it has never done, the fatal lesson of chronic dependence on the community.

This doctrine—because all have the pension, therefore the result will be good—is used in another form also. It is said: if all have, or are entitled to, a pension, there can be no degradation in receiving it. The common sense and experience of the nation have hitherto held dependence on the funds of the community—dependence for which no service has been rendered—to be degrading. In practice, it has looked leniently on dependence by way of outdoor relief, but this rather because that form of relief was more attractive than because dependence was anything but objectionable. And the feeling against dependence in any shape grows, I think. Yet it seems as if some believed that this feeling might be done away with by a process of multiplication. Multiply "some" and make it "all," and it will disappear. But a multiplication of the number of dependents, though it may add to the quantity, will not alter the quality of dependence. If dependence is bad for the few, it is bad for the many. The feeling that the evil is an evil may be decreased, because many participate in it. But the reality—the evil of dependence—remains what it was; and why it is an evil has, I hope, appeared from this paper.

I have said enough of Mr. Booth's scheme. From the democratic standpoint, I confess it seems to me absolutely injurious. Some may adopt it out of a kind of political despair, fearing that democracy will bring back a *régime* of extravagant outdoor relief. But we hardly look for guidance from the arguments of the despairing. If the principles of administration which I have put before you are

sound, they will, by degrees, though possibly only after a period of lapse and contention, be taken up by the common sense of the democracy as they have been by that of the middle class. Others may adopt this scheme as a stepping-stone to Socialism. They are right. The proposal, if adopted, would lead to the general maintenance of the people, and thus to their economic organisation, becoming a duty of the State.

Mr. Chamberlain's Scheme.

Mr. Chamberlain proposes to establish a State Pension Fund. The payments to it are to be voluntary. There are for men tables of payment on a returnable and non-returnable scale. Thus on the returnable table a man who before his twenty-fifth year pays £5 to the Post Office Savings Bank is to be credited with a further sum of £15 from the State Pension Fund. Subsequently he has to pay £1 a year into the fund, and at 65 he can claim a pension of £13 a year. There are also provisions for allowances to his widow in case of death. Thus if the man dies after the third annual payment of £1, his widow may receive 5s. a week for 26 weeks, and 2s. a week to each child under 12 till it reaches that age. If he dies without leaving a widow or children, his representatives receive the original £5. In the case of a woman payments have to be made on the non-returnable scale. £1 : 10s. deposited by a woman in the Post Office Savings Bank before 25 years of age entails a credit of £8 from the State Pension Fund, and thereafter, on the payment of 8s. 8d. a year for 40 years, a pension of £7 : 16s. is due at the age of 65. Thus a man by his larger payments may get 5s. a week at 65, and his premiums would within certain limits be returnable to his widow and children, or he may, by still larger payments under another rule, have 10s. a week at 65; and a woman by the smaller but non-returnable payments may receive 3s. a week at 65.

The object of this scheme is to tempt working men and others to provide for their old age by way of pensions. A

payment of £5 on their part is met by an immediate credit of £15, realisable at 65. In all they pay £45, and receive from the State £15. The scheme is, by comparison with the other, economical. I understand that the estimated cost would not exceed £5,000,000 a year. One chief argument for it is that the Friendly Societies, under the name of sick relief, give superannuation allowances, that this is disastrous from the point of view of insurance, and that their attempts to form old-age pension funds for their members have failed. Lastly, Canon Blackley, who has been in favour of the compulsory payment of each man's pension money by himself by a certain age and without State aid, now supports Mr. Chamberlain, convinced that if his plan be adopted, the scheme very soon will be made compulsory.

A few words on this proposal.

Its effect on pauperism is likely to be extremely small, as the analysis that I have submitted to you shows. Considered as a movement in favour of Friendly Societies, a first question for its promoters is, Is the proposed temptation great enough? The answer is in the negative. The chance of a Friendly Society man living to enjoy his pension to the age of 70, that is for five years only, is but 1 in 3.4. Next, do Friendly Society men, even though they do not take up their own annuity schemes, become paupers? Here, too, the answer is in the negative. Very few members of Friendly Societies come on the rates. Some may receive outdoor, and a very few indoor, and especially infirmary, relief, but that is quite the exception. In fact, they provide for their old age, as other people do, by other means than annuities. It is said that many persons who have been members of Friendly Societies cease to contribute to them and come on the rates. Of this there is very little evidence. Two parliamentary returns on this point are quoted, but it is evident at a glance that they are misleading, and even if they were correct, they would only show that an extremely small proportion of the great body of Friendly Societies men fell away, and ceasing to be members became paupers. The two great Orders—the

Foresters and Manchester Unity of Oddfellows—have recently proposed old-age pension schemes. In the Foresters, for instance, a man may pay £1 : 2 : 2 a year from the age of 20 for a pension of 5s. a week, payable at 65. This will be returnable with 2½ per cent interest. £1 : 8s. from the age of 20 produces the same pension, with the advantage that payments stop at 50. There are no allowances made to widows on the Foresters' terms, for of course the ordinary payments to the society provide for this, but, even without State aid and on a returnable scale, their pensions are much cheaper than Mr. Chamberlain's.

As to the future, Canon Blackley is probably right. If carried (and I believe the Friendly Societies are opposed to it, as they are also to Mr. Booth's plan), the scheme has in it no element of finality.

There are many other schemes. To them I can only refer. Some would give a pension of 5s. to all who had an assured income of 3s. or more, some would improve the terms of post-office annuities, some would combine a pension scheme with outdoor relief to those who were on the pension lists, if before 65 they desired such assistance. Some, thinking the pension schemes unworkable or too expensive, would propose instead of the Poor Law a charitable and rate-supported administration of relief, and would ask for more discrimination and greater leniency.

To sum up. We have two paths before us. One seems comparatively slow and laborious. It leads to social independence. It was followed because the nation had by bitter experience learnt that it, and it only, was the right path. We have found in following it that it has led to comparative contentment, to the development of all kinds of thrift and insurance, and last of all, in certain unions, even to the disappearance of old-age pauperism. At each stage of it we have found also that the alleged impossibility of the poor to maintain themselves, or provide for their future, has in fact disappeared. They have constantly done the impossible. The other path seems quick, though costly. It leads to social dependence. In favour of it we have no social experience. If we follow it we

shall come, we are told, to a promised land of pensions. But most of us drop off before we reach it. Some want the pensions at 55 or 60, and cannot have them. Most of those who might not be paupers, if they had the pensions, become paupers, before they can "enter in." So after all our labour we find that we have most of us failed of our purpose, and the Pensions Schemes do not aid us, as it was said that they would. In this only we shall certainly have succeeded—in throwing the part maintenance of a class of the community after a certain age, but irrespective of indigence, or even of need or want, upon another class. In doing this we shall have adopted a principle which, if it is to serve our purpose, must have a further application. From pensions at 65 we must in seeming justice go to pensions at 60. And so from dependence to ever greater and more fatal dependence. Which path the nation takes rests greatly, if not mainly, with men like yourselves. For you is the question—Whether these Pensions Schemes "will suit the purpose of the nation or not." I say "not." What do you?

Note on Mr. Ritchie's Return.

Since this article was written, Mr. Ritchie's return, referred to on p. 153, has been published. It professes to give "the number of persons of each sex of 65 years of age and upwards, and the number under 65 years of age who had attained 16 years of age, and the number of children under 16 years of age, in receipt of indoor relief and outdoor relief, respectively, on the 1st January 1892, and at any time during the twelve months ended at Lady Day 1892." Indoor vagrants and lunatics in workhouses are included in it. Outdoor vagrants and lunatics (*i.e.* lunatics in asylums, licensed houses, and registered hospitals) are excluded. In this return the total number of paupers, 65 years of age and upwards, at any time during the twelve months, is stated to be 376,427 or 274.24 per 1000 of the population of that age. In an article in the *Economic Journal*, September 1894, entitled "Mr. Charles Booth and the aged poor," will be found criticisms of this return and references to inaccuracies in it. Owing to the great liability to error in a quarterly or yearly census, a day census has always been accepted as the most accurate test of pauperism. If that is used, comparison between the past and present is possible. If that is not used, no such comparison can be made, and reliance must be placed on an isolated return, which, especially in the metropolis, has been shown to be quite misleading, and the relative value of which it is impossible to gauge. —C. S. L.

XI

THE MEANING AND METHODS OF TRUE CHARITY[1]

By H. Dendy

Perhaps the lesson which of all others we are most slow to learn is, that in order to do well it is not enough to mean well. In childhood, it is true, we are always having forced upon our notice the inadequacy of good intentions, but as we grow older, and friends become less ready to point out our mistakes, the moral judgment becomes confused, and the discrepancy between well-wishing and right-doing is lost sight of. External criticism has been removed, and we are too apt to accept this as a proof that there is nothing left to criticise.

Nowhere is this discrepancy so grave as when we come to take up charitable work, to "do good," as it is so often miscalled. I suppose that nearly every one who is given to charity is moved by the desire to exercise some influence, to alter the existing state of affairs in some way; in other words, that his desire for good works does not proceed from a merely selfish desire to improve his own spiritual condition. But it is comparatively seldom that we find any one who can give an account of the good he wishes to do, and can show in what way he proposes to bring it about. We are generally content to work in the dark, and accept the results—if there be any—as a series

[1] A paper read at the first meeting of the Charity Organisation Conferences, London, May 1893.

of surprises. In this sphere of conduct, and in this alone, good intentions are thought to be all-sufficient, and we sow wheat and tares indiscriminately in the faith that an approving Providence will make them all come up wheat.

What I want to do in this paper is to bring out the difference between the charity which only means well—in other words, the charity which means nothing because it knows nothing—and the charity which does well. And first of all I will guard against a misunderstanding. We talk a great deal in our London society about "adequate relief"; it is one of the catch phrases we are always falling into, and I think it is apt to give rise to the impression that all which charity needs to improve it is that there should be more of it. And so the tendency is for the 6d. ticket to give way to the 2s. 6d. dole, and the 2s. 6d. dole to the 10s. allowance, and we fail to see that in this way we are merely exaggerating the evils we deprecate. This desire for adequate relief found its fullest expressions in the Poor Law before its reform in 1834, and there are not wanting signs in London of a repetition of all the mistakes of that Poor Law under the guise of voluntary charity.

What we mean by thorough charity is not merely this idea of giving enough, important as that is. We mean charity that is *thoroughly thought out;* we want people to work with their eyes open, to know, so far as it is given to men to know, what the results of their action will be; to deliberately set before them an ideal towards which they will work, and to the realising of which they will bring all the knowledge which it is in their power to accumulate. We want them to recognise that if they assume the heavy responsibility of intentionally influencing men's lives they must form some idea of what their influence is going to be; and then they will neglect nothing which will throw light upon their work, no details will be too trivial for their notice, no study too arduous for their zeal. Especially must they guard against letting themselves be misled into underestimating the importance of their influence. I doubt whether it is so much modesty as the liking for

irresponsibility which leads us so often to think, or say, that what we can do is so little, that even if it is not useful it cannot do any harm. The real truth is, that we cannot escape this responsibility of influence even if we would; and when we come to do charitable work, of whatever kind it may be, we are deliberately assuming it, and are, therefore, bound to prepare ourselves for it.

Now this thoroughness of knowledge at which we aim will take two directions. It will involve, first, a careful study of the characters and circumstances of the individual men and women with whom we come in contact in the first instance; and it will involve, further, a full acquaintance with the wider social conditions and tendencies within the limits of which we work, and without knowledge of which our efforts are likely to be self-destructive.

Consider for a moment the position of any man or woman in this strange world, and see how inextricably it is involved with a host of facts which are none the less potent for good or for evil because we do not recognise their existence. Human beings cannot be treated as simple units, as if they were all of one kind, and entirely independent of each other. In the first place, there is the man himself and his character; to handle these without a proper understanding is like experimenting with chemicals of which we do not know the properties—the results are more likely to be disastrous than beneficial. Perhaps it is because we have so habituated ourselves to regarding character from the point of view of merit only that we rarely attempt to approach it as impartial students of cause and effect.

Then the man, with his character such as his temperament and surroundings have made it, can only act within the limits of the community of which he is a fraction. His every movement is influenced by relations of innumerable kinds. He is the member of a family, of a church, of a trade; his life is regulated consciously or unconsciously by the laws of his country, and his industrial position rises or falls with that of others all over the civilised world. He is as powerless to resist all these

influences as a drop of water in the sea is to resist the tide, and if we are to help him to maintain his manhood and integrity, it must be by working with, and not against, the great forces which are moulding his life. Man's victories over the natural world have consisted solely in the study and utilisation of natural forces, and if we are to achieve similar victories in the moral world, it must be through a similar study and utilisation of the great moral and social forces already existing.

Here, then, are a few of the questions which we may ask ourselves when we are undertaking a fresh problem in charity. What do we know of this man's character? How has he behaved in the past, and how is he likely to behave in the future? What do we know of his family? Will they be a help or a hindrance to the work we have in hand? What is the influence brought to bear upon him by the church of which he is a member, and can we enlist that influence on our side? How do matters stand with that branch of industry to which he belongs? How about the laws which govern him? Are they such as will counteract our efforts, or may we rely upon them to strengthen us? Unless we prepare ourselves to answer questions such as these we shall act blindly and at random, and by the time we have answered all of them, we shall find ourselves in possession of a considerable amount of very useful and interesting information. Then for the first time we shall be in a position to handle our "case" skilfully, and with hope of good results; for it is at one or another of these points that we must approach our work, and when we have mastered the problem in the manner indicated, the solution will not be slow to present itself. Of course it may prove that this solution does not lie within our reach, and that we must be content with a wise inaction. But the main difficulty is to get understanding; when we have reached that, sympathy and experience will generally suggest the next step. One thing is certain, that in the light of our knowledge we shall lose all confidence in the adequacy of doles and tickets to stem the tide which is overwhelming our protégé, and we shall

cease to believe in the possibility of one remedy for all troubles. Further, the greater interest which we shall gain in our work will enlarge our sympathies in two ways. On the one hand, we shall no longer be content to pass hurriedly on from one "case" to another, dropping a trifle with each; we shall stop to see the results of what we have done, and exhaust all plans until we either succeed or fail conscientiously in curing the particular evil before us. On the other hand, we shall not dare to help the individual at the expense of many; we shall see in many instances that good to one means evil to others, and shall refrain from action, with the melancholy resolve that if we cannot diminish distress we will at least do nothing to increase it.

Perhaps you will think all this rather far-fetched, and fail to see its application to the actual work you may have in hand. Let me, therefore, go a little more into detail, and try to show how such thoughts bear upon particular problems of charity.

First of all, there is the difficult question of character. What we need here is sufficient knowledge of the man's character to show us how he will be likely to act under the new influence we wish to bring to bear upon him. This knowledge we may get in several ways; we may get it from his past history, we may get it from sympathy, and we may get it from self-knowledge. Human nature is apt to be pretty much the same wherever we find it; and many of our mistakes come from expecting heights and depths in the character of others of which we know ourselves to be quite incapable.

One great difficulty over which we stumble in entering upon the consideration of character is the problem of "deserving." Shall we help none but the deserving? and if so, which amongst us shall we elevate to the awful position of arbiter as to who is and who is not deserving? Shall we yield to the difficulty, and rain our gifts upon the just and the unjust alike? and if so, shall we not incur the reproach of encouraging evil and placing a stumbling-block in the way of good? A. T. is a printer's labourer

who fell out of work through temporary loss of sight; a good workman, with a character for steadiness and sobriety, and work to go to when he can pay up his union fees. Meanwhile himself and his family are starving, and unable even to pay the rent. Surely a "deserving" case, and one in which 25s. cannot be misapplied. Suddenly it appears that he has already borrowed money to pay the fees, but has used it to live upon. Our sympathies are transferred to the indignant neighbour who lent the money in the hope of a speedy return, and we agree with him that only a man of no principle will borrow money for one purpose and use it for another. "Undeserving" presents itself as an easy solution of the difficulty. But, after all, how many of us would have been more deserving under the circumstances? A landlord threatening ejectment, and children in want of food, are obstacles which will shut out from view a whole universe of moral and prudential considerations. Let us, therefore, leave the question of merit, pay the fees direct to the union secretary, and get a friendly visitor to endeavour to instil more principle before the next temptation. Here comes in the need of a term to substitute for "deserving," and all we can give is the barbarism "helpable." Is not that significant? All these centuries of charitable effort, and no word found to describe the limits between what we can and what we cannot do by means of charity. It is only within the last few years that we are beginning to recognise practically that money is not a remedy for all social evils, and are learning to discriminate between the poverty which is curable, because we can remove its cause, and the poverty which is incurable, because its causes are too deeply rooted for us to touch.

We will cease, therefore, to constitute ourselves arbiters of who is and who is not deserving of help. We will not use our charity as a reward of merit; if we do, we shall only foster hypocrisy and deceit; but then neither will we scatter it broadcast over good and evil alike in the vain hope that some of it will do no harm. We will rather set ourselves patiently and laboriously to understand clearly the cause of the mischief we wish to cure, and we shall

then find that the maxim "Give him another chance" is in many cases as inapplicable and unscientific as the formula "undeserving." One man I know whose life has been spoiled by this easy-going condonation of faults of character. He is a clever workman, and can command the highest wages when he chooses; but he is quarrelsome and lazy, and has thrown away place after place. For years he was always maintained during his periods of idleness by charitable almsgivers who were sorry for his family, and wanted to give him "another chance." Of course, the more chances were given the more were wanted, and now it has come to this, that his wife and daughters go out to work while he sits at home and minds the baby. A little wholesome starvation at the beginning of his career might have taught this man a lesson he would never have forgotten, and enabled him to preserve his manhood; but hunger is now accounted a greater evil than any loss of self-respect or moral degradation.

Next in importance to personal character comes the consideration of family relations. Until they sink to the very lowest, few people are cut quite adrift from their families, and very much of the success of our work must depend upon whether these are able to lift up or are ready to pull down. In this branch of our studies we may find it necessary to master whole family histories which may sometimes be rather tedious; but it will seldom happen that they are not helpful. As an illustration I may quote the case of Mary E., a hopelessly crippled orphan, who was found living in one of the worst slums in London. The woman with whom she lived was an aunt, herself in a state of abject poverty, with a husband out of work, and children of her own to support. The devotion of this aunt to the poor cripple was quite touching; nothing should induce her to part with her dead sister's child, who had been cast adrift by rich relations on the father's side; they would starve together rather than separate. Neighbours and district visitors were lavish in encomiums and small gifts, and serious thoughts were entertained of raising a weekly allowance for the girl's keep. But with

more knowledge the aspect of affairs changed. The woman's volubility and dirty home first aroused suspicions; a visit to the country town of H. discovered respectable tradespeople who had frequently sent money and clothing for their niece, but finding that it all went in drink had given up in despair. They were still willing to respond to any practical suggestion, and finally, by the help of a lady living near H., Mary has been boarded out with some tenants of hers, and is happy in a new life of health and quietness. Nearly the whole of the cost is borne by the relations at H., who take the kindest interest in her welfare. In this case, then, the charity needed was little more than knowledge; money gifts only aggravated the girl's miseries by keeping her in wretched surroundings among wretched people. Knowledge of the true character and circumstances of the relations on both sides has succeeded in making her as happy and comfortable as it is possible for her to be.

The same instance will serve to illustrate the harm which is done by shallow charity. The London relations kept their hold on the girl merely for the sake of what they could get by her, and there are hundreds of unfortunate cripples being used in a similar manner to attract the shallow charity which flies about London.

Take next the influence of the church to which a man belongs, the religious influence by which he guides his life, and than which it may be that none is stronger for good. But it may be strong also for evil. Where the poor are taught that to trust in Providence obviates the necessity of self-reliance and exertion, it is in vain that you will try to raise them. There are religious institutions in the poorer districts of London, largely entrusted with charitable funds, which, by the irresponsible and ignorant use they make of them, have gathered about them whole colonies of thriftless, indolent loafers. For these the only hope of regeneration lies in the spur of hunger which devoted men and women are labouring night and day to remove. Nor is it only that the idle and dissipated are encouraged; men of a much higher stamp find their minds perplexed,

and their sense of right and wrong confused, by the narrow views of teachers who will not study the problems of the world in which they are placed. I can see now the puzzled countenance of an elderly man who was out of work because his trade had gone to Manchester, and to whom his employers offered a berth in that town. Duty was struggling against inclination; he liked London, he dreaded change; in his dilemma he consulted the Sisters who were in the habit of giving him advice and tickets. "Trust in Providence a little longer" was their dictum. He gratefully accepted the oracle which freed him of responsibility, and has quietly settled down into one of the many thousand Londoners who are maintained by charity. The perplexity was, perhaps, more on my side in an interview with another man who brought his Bible to me to prove that he was to take no thought for the morrow, and then proposed to hand over all responsibility for that morrow to me. Such men as these cannot be dealt with without taking into consideration the religious influences which form so large a part of their lives, and unless we can enlist those influences on our side we must fail of the result at which we aim.

"Out of work through no fault of his own." What a sense of hopelessness falls upon us as this plaint re-echoes in our ears, and we recall the weary number of times we have endeavoured to grapple with the misery it means. It seems such a stubborn, stupid, unanswerable fact this being out of work; we are as helpless as children in face of it, and none of our efforts, from free dinners and soup-kitchens to Mansion-house funds, seem to touch it. What does it all mean?

Let us put aside the last part of the phrase, the "no fault of his own," and assume that the man neither drinks, steals, nor is wilfully idle. This will reduce the number of cases considerably, but it will not much diminish the hopelessness of those which remain. Many of them can be described in negative terms only; they don't drink or steal, but then they don't do anything else either, and mere absence of vice is not enough to fit a man to play an

active part in the world. Sheer incapacity can never be helped, and all we can do with it in our charitable work is to be very careful that we do not put a premium upon it. Sometimes, it is true, when the incapacity is accidental rather than inherent, it can be removed; and there is perhaps no satisfaction like this of enabling a man to take up his position in the industrial ranks. But we must bear in mind that this is not work which can be achieved by means of a few casual tickets or dinners; it often needs months of patient care, and a determination that if we are to fail it shall not be for want of either time or money. Your incapable person is like a London garden, it takes a most extravagant amount of attention to get absurdly small results, but we are very proud of what we do get. But in these cases as in others I would urge the importance of holding your hand unless you are prepared to work with a definite aim before you, and to leave no stone unturned in your effort to realise that aim. For remember that if you fail you have done worse than nothing; you have added one more to the many temptations which beset us all to be incapable, you have put a premium upon incapacity.

The remainder of our "out-of-works" will be men who are at odds with their trade for some reason or other. It may be that the trade has left the country, or that it is dying out altogether; that new kinds of machinery have been introduced, or new regulations have been adopted with regard to labour. But whatever it is, *there is always some reason* why the man who knows his trade cannot get employment, and it is our duty, if we are to work with our eyes open, to know that reason. When we do know it, we shall very likely see that we can do nothing personally, but we shall probably see also that in refraining from action we are helping on a better time, and we shall in any case have the solace of understanding the course we choose.

Sometimes, indeed, a way shows itself out of the difficulty. While I was writing this a man came in to ask to be helped out to Canada. Why did he want to go? Had he friends there? No, he had no friends there, and knew nothing about it, but he was a sawyer, and work had

been very scarce in London; he had been badly off all winter, and he had noticed *that the timber came ready sawn from Canada*, and thought he had better go out to the forests. Now I say that any one who tried to make London more comfortable for that man would be guilty not only of an economic blunder, but of a moral offence; stern experience has opened his eyes and taught him the great lesson that labour, like everything else, must go to the place where it is wanted. But not one in a dozen of the men to whom we offer emigration will accept, because, as they say, there's always a chance in London of something turning up. In other words, there is always some bad Samaritan stepping forward to falsify the lesson which nature is trying to teach.

Nothing is more common in the east of London than to receive applications for help while work is slack, and the temptation is strong to tide a family over a difficult time by temporary help. But why is it slack? In nine cases out of ten you will find either that the "slackness" is quite normal, and such as more careful men have provided for; or, that the trade is decaying, and that it is hopeless to look for a revival. For instance, certain branches of vellum binding and gilding are trades which, owing partly to strikes and partly to change in fashion, have almost entirely left London, and are most unlikely to revive again. Most of the men employed in these trades recognise the fact, and are turning their hands to something else; others there are who have come to rely upon being "out of work through no fault of their own," and scrape together a miserable existence out of odd jobs and charitable relief committees. Here, again, I say, that when we relieve these men or their families in a way which merely helps them to keep on as they are, and does not help them to make a fresh start in another direction, we are guilty of a grave offence.

I can illustrate in another way the harm which may be done for lack of proper understanding of a trade. The furniture trade of London is centred in a comparatively small area in the north-east district; it was at one time extremely prosperous, but has latterly been declining owing to the number of small men who work on their own account and

undersell the large firms. At first this looks satisfactory, as if the middle-man were being done away with, and the labourer taking his proper position; and if these men worked on a sound basis this might be the right view to take. Unfortunately only a very small percentage of them keep solvent for more than two or three years at the longest; oftener two or three months sees the end of their venture. They save a few pounds from their earnings as journeymen, they work at a loss in order to get rid of their goods in an overstocked market, they use up all their material, and must beg or borrow to replace it, and frequently they end by selling their goods at mere cost of material. A special class of middle-man has arisen to take advantage of these people, and it is they alone who benefit from the system. Now, this kind of trade is largely supported by charity, which likes to think that for a few pounds it can set a man on his feet; it does not stop to consider that by helping him to undersell the legitimate trade, it is also helping to throw hundreds of better men out of employment.

Of the importance of knowledge of the Poor Law, and proper co-operation with it, I need not speak here, as it is to be discussed at another meeting. Other influences there are at work, and fresh lines of knowledge will open up before us as our experience grows, but those which I have mentioned are among the most important. It has been difficult in so short a space to explain clearly all which I have in my mind as to the importance of this thoroughness of knowledge, or to convince you, as I am myself convinced, that no really good work can be done without it. Is it too much to expect from the charitable worker? If it is, then let him frankly give it up, and betake himself to that dullest of occupations—minding his own business. But I do not believe it. People who will go through the dreary monotony of dole-giving or ticket-dispensing, on the vague chance of helping their weaker brethren, will welcome the prospect of an intelligent study such as I have indicated, and such as is carried on in at least one institution in London. The time will come when no town will be without its training college for social

workers, and no parish without its reference library on the industrial questions which give rise to problems of poverty. Meanwhile it may be difficult to combine in one person all the kinds of knowledge and experience which are needed, but this is a difficulty which can always be got over by taking counsel together in our charities, and by making use of the wisdom of others to supplement our own shortcomings.

I like to picture humanity as a great army pressing on towards an invisible goal, and guided by a wisdom not its own. No power can stay its course nor alter its direction, and those who try to turn aside on their own little paths of self-indulgence, or will not keep step with their comrades, or falter with failing strength, are cast down and trampled underfoot. It is with these that we have to deal in our charitable work, and what we must aim at is not to make their fall easy, but to raise them to their feet again, to turn their faces towards the light, to lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees. How can we do this unless we ourselves are working with open eyes, unless we understand their mistakes better than they do themselves, and can point out the path in which they have to tread?

XII

SOME ASPECTS OF REFORM

By M. M'Callum

There is undoubtedly a charm about the very word reform that acts strongly on young and enthusiastic minds. "To make the crooked straight and the rough places plain" is a laudable ambition, and may fire even the man who has settled down into the acquiescence of middle age, if, as has happened of late, more power is placed in his hands and he feels that he touches a fresh lever with which he may move his world. He who would cry "pause" alike to eager youth and to more patient age must not only have good grounds for such chilling interference, but must possess the courage of one who fights an uphill battle, as well as the sympathy of the helpmate who can say, "Brother, I only bid you wait that you may better attain the end we both have in view."

Help of this kind was never more needed than now, when we are borne along by a gathering tide of enthusiasm and of strenuous efforts that make for important social change. But the very facilities which enable us to develop our best purposes create also fresh hindrances to their fulfilment. The press with its thousand party tongues, the telegraph quickening the exchange of incomplete opinion, the public meeting that stirs and interests us—all these are good servants but bad masters, and we are apt to think that it is well with us when we are in reality full of excitement rather than of experience, and are glibly using

phrases the full meaning of which has never reached our brain. And below the multitudinous voices we hear the lament of the homely and bewildered voter who is "tired of talk, for there's no knowing what to believe." Now, it is thanks to him with his strong common sense and desire to do right, that we have hitherto weathered political storms with such enviable ease, and what we have now to do is to help him to winnow the grain from the chaff, and to keep clearly before him ideals worthy of his steady allegiance, so that we may help to make the conditions of life in our beloved country desirable and free for all her sons and daughters.

To some it may seem far-fetched and almost absurd to propose that we should strive after the sane, free, and fearless spirit that characterises the great period of the Greek democracy; yet where can we find a more suggestive picture of civic life than in the famous "Funeral Oration" in which the great historian brings vividly before us the glory of the city of the Violet crown. We may well adopt its spirit while we expand the form to suit our modern conditions.

"It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not of the few. But while the law secures equal justice to all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognised. . . . Neither is poverty a bar, but a man may benefit his country whatever be the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private intercourse we are not suspicious of one another. . . . While we are thus unconstrained in our private intercourse, a spirit of reverence pervades our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for authority and for the laws, having an especial regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured, as well as to those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor the reprobation of the general sentiment. And we have not forgotten to provide for our weary spirits many relaxations from toil. . . . We are lovers of the beautiful, though simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind

without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the State because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no share in public business not as a harmless but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. We alone do good to our neighbours not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit. . . . Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died; they could not bear the thought that she might be taken from them; and every one of us who survive should gladly toil on her behalf."[1]

Keeping this or some such picture before us, what is our right course in regard to reform? Surely, in the first place, we must endeavour to have a clear idea of the ultimate principles on which, as on a foundation, our measures of reform are to be built up, for without this knowledge we may in attacking one evil create a greater, as though a man were to pull down his house because his chimney-stacks were out of repair. And we ought to understand the characteristics and methods that have, on the whole, been most conducive to our national development. We must satisfy ourselves as to the value of that experience which is treated lightly by many, perhaps because it is adverse to some scheme that appeals to their imagination. Modern conditions are said to render history more or less valueless, character is a less important factor than environment, and human nature is modifiable to an almost unlimited extent by legislation, while the claims of a universal brotherhood are pressed upon us with equal eagerness—a brotherhood that can only exist because of the unity of

[1] Jowett's *Thucyd.* ii. 35 ff.

human nature that underlies all conditions, and displays itself through the changes of the centuries. Unless we can habitually mature our opinions on vexed questions and on opposing evidence by the help of accurate knowledge, we cannot hope to form a reasonable estimate of the value of the current criticisms of society or of the panaceas that are offered to us.

Our national history shows us the continual struggle of our race towards freedom and personal independence, and we can recognise the same spirit manifesting itself in the meetings of the earliest village wardmote, among the barons coercing the king into signing the great Charter, among merchants asserting municipal rights, and in the modern trade unionist striving to improve the conditions under which he labours. The mode of the demand differs, and each class in turn has cared for its own, but all have borne their part in the growth of the national organism and in obtaining for us the state of things which, however faulty, wrings from citizens of the Great Republic the envying comment, "Yours is the freest country in the world." Freest in which to speak, to discuss, to thrash out our differences without fear or favour, and because this freedom is our cherished inheritance it behoves us to preserve it with jealous care.

A second and equally important characteristic is the high value we as a nation have set on family life; it is easy to point to the failures that are noticeable; it is easier to overlook the mass of quiet folk "without a history," who draw all that is good in them from the self-discipline, the affection, and the co-operation that that bond implies, who find a continuous spiritual life in the tradition of the good lives of their kin who have passed away, and who regard the civic ideal to which we aspire as but the family life writ large. A shrewd American has touched two keynotes in remarking that there is no nation that can set aside all ties and launch its children into the world so readily as ours, and none that cherishes so passionate a love of home; we believe indeed that the daring, colonising, confident Englishman would never have made or kept

his place in the world but for the magic of that little word that recalls for him the spirit of his own family hearth and of his fatherland. We are reminded sometimes that the sins of these our wanderers have often been as scarlet, but their faith and heroism have been written in letters of blood, and it ill becomes us who reap the fruit of their labours to criticise them too harshly by our fireside standard. It is true enough, as the ballad tells us, that "on the bones of the English the English flag is stayed." Whoever has wandered among our exiles and seen the eyes light up and the face flush at the greeting of one from the old village or the old house, understands how deep in their hearts lies an unconfessed *heimweh*, and to how great an extent the influence of England is the influence of home. If, then, we hold that family life is the ark of the sanctuary on which no sacrilegious hand must be laid, we must be on our guard against destructive measures, whether they are openly advocated or are presented to us in cleverly designed wrappers which do not bear the mark, "made in the Socialist camp." We are familiar with the Socialist who denies that he or his section of the party cherish any such schemes, but while their literature and their lectures remain he will hardly convince us even of his accuracy. It is well to have great faith in English common sense and to believe that in the end it will assert itself, but the sense of the community is the sense of individuals, and it behoves us to "keep our powder dry" by exerting what influence we may on behalf of the improvement and against the abolition of the family.

The mother who has read in the eyes of her grown son or daughter the responsive affection that is her reward for years of care, can afford to smile at the Socialist writer who regretfully scorns her as "too *bourgeoise* to accept the measure of freedom" he is "prepared to offer," and she can fully understand the meaning for women of the proposals to take the children from them and substitute for their care a system of public management, and to abolish the marriage tie. Even the Mormons have

not so repudiated responsibility. Socialism of this kind is indistinguishable from purely selfish individualism, and as such carries in it the germ of failure, however arrogantly it may be set forth as the latest gospel.[1] Let our *bourgeoise* see to it that she makes the issues clear to the emotional sisters who, in the reaction from the tyranny of convention, are ready to put on the heavier yoke of license, and let her also remember that if the plea of poverty is to be generally accepted as sufficient ground for cancelling parental responsibility, then the thin edge of the wedge is being inserted in the name of philanthropy. To help those who are in difficulties to raise their standard of conduct and to perform their duties, and to punish those who persistently neglect them, is not only salutary, but is reform in detail, while the opposite course is, in effect, to say, your duties are hard to fulfil, therefore do not attempt the task, but go your ways and let others undertake them, which is surely the language of decadence.

It seems incredible that it should be needful to suggest that persons proposing any reform ought to be familiar with the existing conditions of the thing to be reformed, yet it would be very rash to assume that this is always the case. A Board School manager, for example, soon grows accustomed to the surprise of reactionary visitors who may be induced by her to examine the working of the system at which they rail, and even greater is the amazement of the "advanced" orator who accidentally visits a workhouse and finds—not that which he has hitherto described. The lack of the sense of responsibility in such persons is no less striking than the readiness with which the public accept their mere assertions if they are couched in effective language; but on quicksands of this kind what statesmanlike reform can be built up?

To take an instance, there has been endless declamation of late about the necessity of eradicating the "pauper taint" and of removing any sense of disgrace from the children in our parish schools, but how many people have

[1] *Vide* "Socialism," by Morris and Bax, quoted in Flint's *Socialism*, p. 284.

inquired, in the expressive American phrase, "just what this amounts to"?

The word pauper has come to mean not only a "poor" man, as in the original Latin, but also a person who fails to support him or her self and depends on others for the necessaries of life. It is objected to by quite different classes of persons, by Socialists who handle the Poor Law as a political weapon, by confused sentimentalists who tinker at externals and shrink from realities, and sometimes by honest wage-earners who have a secret misgiving lest they or their friends may one day fail to provide for themselves, and so be mingled with the unworthy who depend on the rates. With this dread and dislike no one can fail to sympathise heartily, for it is the outcome of that honourable love of independence that has been the making of England, but none the less does it remain true that the man who is supported by the Poor Law *has* failed to support himself whether he is called a pauper or not, and—and here lies the sting—that very many of those who are in this condition are, at least in towns, the refuse of the population.

What precisely is meant, then, by the pauper taint, and are the children conscious of it? The phrase is commonest in the mouths of those who constantly assure us that no disgrace whatever does or ought to attach to the receipt of outdoor relief, or in fact to any form of assistance derived through the Poor Law; there seems, therefore, to be some confusion when they make an opposite statement as to the schools. Let us try to clear up the matter so that we may at least know what it is that we are discussing. A doubtful point is sometimes simplified by merely changing the *venue*, so let us ask for what reason an artisan's wife, before the days of free education, paid the high fees of a voluntary school where the teaching was very inferior to that of a neighbouring Board School, attended chiefly by the children of rough parents, many of whom were near to and sometimes crossed the pauper line? Her reason was, that she feared for her neat and well-trained children the unpleasant possi-

bilities, both moral and physical, the "taint" of contact with those who came daily from dirty and ill-ordered homes. A well-to-do parent who is anxious for his children's good asks in exactly the same spirit about the "tone" of the school to which he proposes to send his son, and he would be thought strange indeed who should choose one in which the boys were on the whole ill-mannered, or the parents were known to be leading unsatisfactory lives. That we have unhappily a large number of such parents among us is undeniable; that when they are poor they tend to drift to the Workhouse, and that their children are dependent on the rates, is also as true as that heredity visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, whether rich or poor. On the other hand, many of the children in the parish schools have no cause whatever to be ashamed of their origin, and have often every reason to be proud of a widowed mother who has done her utmost for them; and Managers and Guardians who in long years of labour have made themselves familiar with the character and after histories of hundreds of these children, can point to well-to-do youths and self-respecting girls who have gone out from the schools, who revisit them with pleasure, and have no consciousness of a "taint," unless indeed the newspapers inform them of it.

Here, then, we seem to arrive at the contradictory conclusion that there is a taint and that there is not one, and the paradox is correct. We have only to search a little deeper and we shall reach the underlying truth that reconciles the two statements—a truth which will resist attack as long as we retain any healthy power of discriminating between right and wrong and of giving our preference to the former. There is a taint which seems to be ineradicable, and is indeed often inexplicable; it may almost be said that some people in every class are born paupers, and it matters nothing whether they are a care and a drag upon rich relatives or upon the Poor Law, the initial difference being that in one case their failure is whispered about in a family circle, and in the other case they figure

in "returns" and the public hears about them. The taint is one of character that defies the influence of a good environment just as successfully as another type of character resists evil surroundings. The notorious "allowance men" of Canada, who drink and live idly on the money they beg from the old folk at home, who often can ill spare it, and the army pensioner drawing 2s. 2d. a day who goes cheerfully to the Workhouse between his quarterly drinking bouts, are instances in point of this self-made pauperism.

But as regards the schools, I do not believe that the child of decent parents suffers from a sense of disgrace, or that he thinks about such questions more than any other child of his years. That the more thoughtful parents and the well-doing children, when they reach an age for reflection, may regret that they could not be brought up in the ordinary way at home, is not improbable, even at a time when we are assured that dependence is quite creditable. And of the unhappy remainder what shall we say? Will argument or the abolition of even a neat and serviceable uniform take the "taint" from their blood?[1] Well may we complain that while our theorists are agitating about grievances, some of which are magnified if not imagined, real needs and real troubles are being overlooked or set aside. This is not the place to deal with particular reforms in detail, but rather to insist on the vital necessity of accurate knowledge acquired by personal effort, as the first equipment of every reformer, be his plan or party what it may. No doubt this is a hard saying for him who desires at once to "do something," to step into the arena in short and "drink delight of battle with his peers," and it is still harder for the emotional superficial woman; but there is no royal road to the acquisition of that experience without which the eloquent speaker is apt to be a false guide, and the most fruitful lessons in life are at times a trifle dull in the learning, unless the student is inspired by that deep and robust enthusiasm which finds nothing that is human petty or uninteresting.

We have of late had many object-lessons in matters of

[1] Cf. p. 51, "The Protection of Children."

reform, and they are drawing attention to the presence and to the undeniable prominence of the professional politician (who is the curse of the United States), as well as to the methods by which public opinion is being more or less influenced. The greatest efforts seem to be directed, not to gathering and placing before the public all the evidence for and against a particular scheme, so as to ensure a careful and reasonable consideration of it, but simply to gaining a party victory at any price, or to assisting an unscrupulous propaganda.

When an audience is gathered nominally to thrash out a long list of far-reaching resolutions on Poor Law reform, —resolutions that, if passed, must have the effect of largely increasing pauperism,—when these are carried wholesale by the simple plan of shouting down opposition, when the smiling leaders on the platform make no serious effort to maintain order or to protect those who wish to argue, when a quite reckless statement is made about certain girls, and the lady who knows more about them than any person living cannot obtain a hearing in their defence, and when a party paper records the results of the meeting with warm approval,—the time seems to have come for plain speaking. These are the tactics of fanatics or partisans, but they do not commend themselves to the ordinary English mind nor create confidence in schemes that require such support. If the London Reform Union excuses itself on the ground that this is part of the process of rousing London from its apathy, we may observe that some fevers are quite as fatal as coma, and that, in the words of a well-known writer, "the legislator may think it hard that his power for good is restricted, but he has no reason to complain of any limits on his power for evil."

Superficiality seems to be the sin of our time in all ranks and quarters, and examples of it are not without their humorous side. The Poor Law Report of 1834, justly termed a classic by Graham Wallas, teems with illuminating incidents, yet a representative of the Primrose League could only tell a serious audience that we should not now make men stand in a village pound! "The eye only sees

what it brings the power of seeing," and some of our reformers appear to suffer from cataract.

The late elections under the Local Government Act display the weak points of the modern social movement, for party loyalty on both sides has been strained to support candidates whose sole recommendation was their adoption of a "ticket" or their adhesion to a political creed. "Vote for the Unionist Guardians" is surely a crowning absurdity in placards. All sorts and conditions of men and women regret that the fight has been on these lines and admit the consequent weakness of their lists, and yet take refuge behind the somewhat feeble defence that they "must" do this thing that they disapprove, and that it cannot be helped. Is it not possible before the next elections come round to break these imaginary bonds and persuade ourselves that it is our first duty to choose as our vestrymen, councillors and guardians, men and women of honourable and reliable character, whose conduct of their ordinary business enables us to judge of their capacity and fitness for posts of trust.[1] If our party orders otherwise we are on the horns of this dilemma: either the candidates are being selected injudiciously, in which case it lies with us, by united effort, to improve the selection, or they are chosen by a clique or in some other unsatisfactory way, and if in that case we cannot influence the selection we are bound to revolt. It is not enough that a man should be a total abstainer or a churchwarden or a Trade Unionist if he has not other necessary qualifications. He may be either of these things or may be stamped with any other hall-mark, and yet may not be wise, thorough, and honourable in all his ways, and unless he is up to the required standard in these respects, he will fall below it in many others, be the hall-mark never so clear.

We have yet to see how the new Boards will fulfil their

[1] Owners of houses that have been closed by the sanitary authorities, or in which serious defects have been found, should not be recommended for Municipal Boards, yet both political parties have been guilty of this elementary blunder, a singularly inappropriate one for professed "Progressives."

duties, but judging by electioneering promises it is plain that the administration of outdoor relief will be as fruitful a source of jobbery as it was under the middle class Guardians of sixty years ago. It is worth while to notice in passing how the most "advanced" reformers are reactionaries without knowing it, for they are using the phrases of that forgotten time. It was the idea of a humane administration that opened the flood-gates of outdoor relief early in the century and produced such terrible results, and a little later men and women demanded payment for discharging the ordinary offices of humanity towards their aged parents. There is this important difference between then and now, that formerly that unkindly temper was the result of persistent outdoor relief, whereas now it is encouraged in advance by the socialistic advocates of that system.

No fair-minded person can feel otherwise than ashamed of the misrepresentations that disgraced the School Board election, however effective they may have proved in the hands of skilful party operators; by far the most heated canvassers were women, and it is probably true that until they have learnt to take part more wisely in municipal work and interests, we must expect from them a large amount of partisan effort pure and simple, more especially if a religious question is even remotely involved. That honourable and conscientious women who blindly accept a *mot d'ordre* can lend themselves to the publication of absolutely unfounded statements, is obvious to any one who, knowing the Board Schools, listened to the cry of the canvasser.

Unhappily misrepresentation too often appeals skilfully to the passions, and in doing so, confuses both the issues and the judgment. The man who repeatedly suggests to an audience the idea that all rich men spend their afternoons in drinking champagne at clubs, evidently desires to arouse, however unfairly, a feeling of class hatred; but he would be the first to attack, and rightly attack on ethical grounds, a lecturer who should present to the public as false a picture of the life of all artisans. There is one evening

paper (all honour to it) that has uttered plain truths about its own side and has given the electors sober and independent advice, yet even in its pages we find it alleged that not less but more sensation is required in the statement of social needs, though it may be truly said that sensation and misrepresentation are so frequently akin, that reform masquerading in a sensational mantle can hardly be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion. If an illustration is required, we have only to turn to the persistent attacks upon the Poor Law that have been carried on for some time back by the Socialist party. Of thoughtful and accurate criticism we cannot have too much, for it is the foundation of healthy progress, but when the criticism assumes another form the opposite view acquires a certain attractiveness. For example, within four days one party paper makes a sweeping assertion about workhouse diet, which, if true at all, can only be so in particular cases; but as an inquiry on the subject was not inserted, the authority for the statement cannot be ascertained. On the following day, in a somewhat optimistic article on the interesting subject of afforestment, we are told that the "payment of poor-rates and the administration of a Poor Law on the *cul-de-sac* pattern is a difficulty." More than one reader has vainly sought for the connecting link. Afforestment appears to be the business of the Woods and Forests, but even if it came under some other department it certainly is no concern of the Guardians or the Poor Rate. So far as it affords employment, it must, in the ordinary labour market, attract those who are unemployed and can perform the work; and if a certain number of men could thus be engaged in really useful and productive labour under good conditions it would be thoroughly satisfactory; but where does the Poor Law come in? We cannot suppose that any newspaper desires seriously to recommend what is almost the creation of a fresh department in order that Government may pass hundreds of loafers through its hands on one of the common and inefficient plans of winter relief. This would be a sham instead of a reform, and our Socialist friends

are much too shrewd to court failure so lightly. We do not doubt that afforestment would be undertaken, if at all, on reasonable lines, but in the meantime it has been useful, for, as the old proverb has it, "any stick will do to beat that dog" named Poor Law.

In a similar spirit the same paper, in reviewing *Oliver Twist*, recommends that a copy be laid on the table of every Board room "for reference." Now setting aside the question of sensationalism *versus* accuracy in the tale, this suggestion, taken along with the accompanying quotations, can only be intended to create an impression which is substantially incorrect, as any one who examines the improvements that have taken place in the last few years is well aware. It would be as just, because there are unfortunately still ignorant nurses, to ignore the whole system of trained nursing and hold up Mrs. Gamp as an example "for reference." An experienced reader discounts these statements with ease, and they are important only as indications of the spirit that underlies them. The writers of many noteworthy passages cannot be as ignorant as they seem, and the observer is forced to conclude that they are mere crusaders holding with others of their party that their "first duty is propaganda," and that "the end justifies the means," nor does a somewhat varied experience contradict this view. Criticism is epitomised by the poet who sang: "A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies," and he is surely the best reformer who maintains that his first duty is honesty, and that the means must be worthy of the end.

Our electioneering terms no longer describe the electors, for many a Moderate is not a Tory, and many a Progressive who heartily accepts a number of the opinions that that word connotes, is not a Socialist, and the sooner we arrive at a better definition the more clearly we shall understand the nature of our collective action.

If we ardently desire true progress, if we think a day wasted in which we do not make some personal effort, however small, towards the realisation of our ideals, let us have done with nostrums, and let us take to heart the

wise words of a man who has had ample experience of the difficulties that surround the modern statesman:

"There is," says Mr. Asquith, "no royal, and there is no parliamentary, road to the industrial millennium, but if we keep steadily before us that the object of legislation and of government is not to place parties in power, is not to carry on an interminable wrangle or a political controversy, but is, as far as may be, to raise the average condition of ordinary men and women—to bring within their reach some of those opportunities, not merely of material comfort, but of intellectual and of social refinement, which are now beyond the reach of most of us; if we keep that purpose steadily in view, and if in the pursuit of it we do not allow ourselves to be daunted by temporary obstacles, or to be diverted by impossible and fantastic dreams, then we may be sure that slow, gradual, disappointing as the process often seems, yet as the years roll by we will advance by cautious, but at the same time by sensible, steps to a higher level both of national and individual life."

This passage is pitched in a lower key than that used by the Greek orator who saw the triumphs of his day, and could not perceive the germs of impending disaster. But the change is a fitting one, for the modern speaker has to deal with far more complex problems, and amidst contending political influences must often vainly strive to maintain those healthy conditions of life and character without which States become rotten at the core. And as for the Greek, so for the modern the eternal verities remain, wisdom will be justified sooner or later, whether by the ruin of those who disregard her, or by the success of those who have the patience, the high resolve, and the passion for knowledge and honesty that alone can bring them a step nearer their ideals. Therefore, let us scrutinise keenly the proposals that are so boldly flaunted as cures for our social ills, remembering that *chi va piano va sano, e chi va sano va lontano*, and that no genuine effort, however humble, to acquire and to spread thorough knowledge, whether within or without our family circle, is ever lost to the good cause.

XIII

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH POOR LAW

By H. Dendy

1. *The Conditions under which the Poor Law developed.*

It is characteristic of social organisations which have attained to a certain degree of complexity that any sudden development or unprepared change in the industries by which they are supported, tends to break up the industrial ranks preparatory to their reorganisation in a form more suited to the new conditions. A change of this kind always makes itself felt through the community at large, and however great the benefits derived from it by the community as a whole, it is seldom that it does not entail suffering upon some one class.[1] This class is not necessarily that of the labourer; if the new industry is sufficiently similar to the old to absorb all the labourers previously engaged, or if any external cause concurs to diminish their numbers, it may well be that they will take up a stronger position than before; as, for instance, in the second half of the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. On the other hand, it may be that the change is one to which the adult labourer cannot adapt himself, and it then

[1] This fact is recognised in a curious document issued by the Privy Council in 1595, urging the enforced observation of fast-days, because of the numbers connected with the fishing trade who were thrown out of work since less fish was eaten (quoted by Ribton-Turner, p. 124).

happens that we get an outcast class for whom there is no function in the industrial organism. Whether it disappears in the course of the next generation, or whether it perpetuates itself as a parasite upon the community, largely depends upon how it is handled by the community, and it is in the attempt to deal with this question that the Poor Law, with all its problems of administration, has arisen.

There are two main tendencies in its development. On the one hand, it is moulded by the feeling that all human beings, even though they may have fallen out of the industrial ranks, are still members of the community, and as such cannot be allowed to perish. On the other hand, by the dread that the class should not only become permanently outcast, but that it should even increase in numbers, unless checked by deterrent measures. It is where the two tendencies are fairly balanced that we get the best development of the Poor Law as at once deterrent and constructive, and as aiming primarily at restoring the outcast class to its status in the community.

The first half of the sixteenth century was one of the periods when great social changes had thrown out of the industrial ranks large numbers of men who became both a terror and a burden to the community. For a picture of the magnitude and miseries of this class we need only turn to Sir T. More's *Utopia*, or to Harrison's *Description of England*. Speaking of "roges" the latter says: "For there is not one year commonlie, wherein three or four hundred of them are not devoured and eaten up by the gallowes in one place and another. It appeareth by Cardane . . . how Henrie the eight, executing his laws verie severlie against such idle persons, I meane great theeves, pettie theeves and roges, did hang up threescore and twelve thousand of them in his time. He seemed for a while greatlie to have terrified the rest: but since his death the number of them is so increased . . . that except some better order be taken, or the laws already made be better executed, such as dwell in upland towns or little villages shall live but in small safetie and rest."

How had it come into existence at a time when, as

Eden points out (p. 109), "the nation was making unexampled strides towards the attainment of opulence and industry"? Ashley (Book II. chap. v.) goes at some length into the causes. Primarily, of course, there was the agrarian revolution, the accumulation of farms into comparatively few hands, and the change from arable to pasture, which rendered outcast almost the whole class of agricultural labourers. Concurrently with this was proceeding a change in the methods of carrying on manufactures; the somewhat narrow but methodical "gild system" was being superseded by private enterprise with all its wider possibilities and greater uncertainties (see Eden, p. 106). The numbers of the "unemployed" were increased also by the tendency both of private individuals and institutions to dispense with the train of followers and dependents, which in old days was almost the only outlet for ostentation and luxury; and finally the difficulties caused by these changes were aggravated by a series of bad harvests. The existing agencies for dealing with poverty must have failed before demands of such magnitude, even if they had remained in their full vigour; but the decline of the gilds and the arbitrary dealing of the Tudors with Church institutions left no resource but private charity. How far the monasteries had solved the problem of Poor relief is an interesting question which cannot be discussed here; one thing seems certain that, at the time in question, they had proved thoroughly inadequate to this branch of their work, and are even said to have degenerated from remedying to causing poverty. It seems probable that the only injury inflicted by their dissolution upon the poor consisted in adding to the burden of the community those whom they had taught to depend upon their funds. In other words, "The Abbeys did but maintain the poor which they made" (Fuller).[1]

Private charity proved, as it must always prove when uneducated and unorganised, utterly incompetent to deal

[1] Mr. Ribton-Turner suggests (*Vagrants and Vagrancy*, p. 85) that the 50,000 inhabitants of the religious houses must themselves have joined the ranks of the vagrant to a large extent.

with the problem. Taught by the Church that almsgiving is, in itself, a saving virtue irrespective of the merits of the case or the recipient, and frequently moved rather by fear of the "sturdy vagabond" and "valiant beggar" than by benevolence, private charity was obviously only augmenting the evil, and it became necessary for the State to intervene and definitely take upon itself the task. In doing so, it did not at first make any new departure; it merely amplified and put into force methods which were of long standing. It must be accounted a virtue, though perhaps a somewhat stern one, that the State, even when forced to recognise the existence of an outcast class, has never from the earliest times condoned it. The day when it first does so will be an evil one for the community. The early statutes of labourers were the result of an attempt—not altogether a mistaken one—to force the labourer back to the social status from which he had cast himself adrift; the Poor Law of the sixteenth century began in attempts to apply the same principle under very different conditions. That the first idea was to regulate the position of the labouring class as a whole, and not to deal with a pauper class standing wholly outside the industrial community, seems likely from the way in which, in its earlier stages, the Poor Law was mixed up with regulations of a very different kind referring to the games and dress of the people (see Burns, p. 19 *sqq.*) The statutes of labourers were intended to compel the working classes to fulfil their function in the State, and are the outcome of the old feudal system in which a definite position is assigned to every class in the community. The vagabond and idler is not to be allowed to consider himself exempt from the duties of his class, but is "to put himself to labour as a true man ought" (Burns, p. 27); and this is the keynote of the earlier legislation of the sixteenth century. The excessive rigour of the law against crimes (72,000 "great and petty thieves were put to death during Henry's reign") was supplemented by the severity of statutes against the mode of living which gave rise to those crimes. The Act of 1536 ordains penalties of whipping, mutilation, and death upon valiant

beggars and vagabonds found straying from their own parishes; and the Act of 1547 assigns similar penalties to every man or woman able to work and refusing to do so. It was in a similar spirit that the attempt was made to control private charity; alms are to be refused to vagrants in order to compel them to work (Burns, p. 22); the Act of 1536 ordains that "no person shall make any common dole, or shall give any ready money in alms otherwise than to the common boxes and common gatherings." These deterrent measures were necessarily accompanied by others of a more constructive nature. "Relief-works" were not yet within the sphere of practical politics, though Ashley mentions that "the Government had laid before the Commons the draft of a bill providing that 'sturdy beggars . . . should be set to work at the King's charge'"; but it was a standing instruction to local authorities to find employment for their own poor, and this side of the question was later on to receive much attention. But the State could not fail to recognise the existence of a large class of poor, "the impotent and poor in very deed," and having done its best to check the miscellaneous relief which this class used to share with the valiant beggars, it became incumbent upon it to make authorised provision for its needs. In this way the principle of discrimination was introduced, and a field marked off within which private charity could give free play to its benevolent instincts without endangering the welfare of the community. From the first, the principle of local responsibility was enforced, and though this developed evil consequences in the settlement laws there can be little doubt of its wisdom on the whole. At first, the State attempted merely to direct, and not to enforce, private charity. As a means of selecting the recipients, recourse was had in 1530 to the old custom (Ratzinger, *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Armenpflege*, p. 172) of granting licenses to beg to those incapable of labour, with the difference that the power of granting these licenses formerly exercised by the bishops was now delegated to the justices. But this licensed begging was contrary to the whole spirit of the age, and although the system

survived in some parts certainly until towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, yet subsequent measures are mainly in the direction of guaranteeing provision for the incapable.

2. *Poor Law from* 1558 *to* 1760.

Thus, when Elizabeth came to the throne, the course to be taken by the Poor Law was already sketched out in its main lines, and subsequent legislation only developed it on those lines. Its most important features at that time were its severity in dealing with the able-bodied poor, its prohibition of miscellaneous charity, its charge upon local authorities to provide both maintenance and housing for their impotent poor, and its somewhat vague instructions to them to provide work for the honest.

It will be convenient for purposes of arrangement to trace the working of the Poor Law during the two hundred years in question under different headings, according to the class of persons with whom it attempted to deal, and the manner of its administration. Those for whom it provides in one way or another fall naturally into two classes—the able-bodied and the impotent; and these again, as legislation develops, are distinguished, the able-bodied into (1) the rogue or vagabond, and (2) the honest poor, the impotent into (3) those who are past work, or have no industrial future before them, and (4) those who are capable of future work if properly trained—the children.

Taking them in this order, we shall begin with

(*A*) *The Sturdy Vagabond*, who plays so large a part in industrial history in the first half of the sixteenth century. In the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign we find mention chiefly of three varieties—the vagabond, the sturdy beggar, "commonly called rogue or Egyptian," and "masterless men," having no settled means of livelihood. Between 1558 and 1601 there is little mitigation of the severe penalties against these, and the burden of proving that he was not one of them lay with the labourer who should venture to change either his place of abode or employ-

ment. By the Act 5 Eliz. he is required to provide himself with a certificate or testimonial under pain of imprisonment, and if he fails to procure one within twenty-one days of his imprisonment, he is to be whipped and "used as a Vagabonde." On the 10th of July 1569 a "search" was ordered, primarily in Yorkshire, but also in other "suspicious" parts throughout the realm, which lasted from 9 P.M. to 4 P.M. the next day, and resulted in the capture of 13,000 masterless men (Strype, quoted by Ribton-Turner, *Vagrants and Vagrancy*, p. 104). The city of London in April of the same year had a similar search, and consigned their captives according to their condition—the vagabonds to Bridewell, the impotent to St. Bartholomew's or St. Thomas's Hospital. The manner in which the vagabonds were "used" when caught, we may learn from the Act of 1572 (14 Eliz.) entitled "An Acte for the Punishment of Vacabondes, and for Relief of the Poore and Impotent," which ordains that they are to be committed to gaol until the next session, and on conviction are "to bee grevously whipped, and burnte through the gristle of the right eare with a hot Iron of the compasse of an Inch about." Repeated convictions are punishable by death. A long list of the persons punishable under the Act is given, including those who can give no account of how they lawfully get a living. As a less direct, but perhaps more certain means of diminishing the evil, the same Act declares that "any person harbouring or giving money, lodging, or other relief to any such rogue, vagabond, or sturdy beggar, either marked or not," shall be liable to a penalty of 20s.

The cruelty of these laws can perhaps hardly be judged by our standards of to-day; they were framed to meet a new and exceptional evil, and it is difficult to say whether anything less severe would have succeeded as well. Harrison says: "It is not yet full threescore years since this trade began; but how it has prospered since that time it is easie to judge; for they are now supposed, of one sex and another, to amount to above 10,000 persons" (quoted by Ribton-Turner, p. 119, who goes on to explain that the

"trade" is that of professional mendicity carried on in a corporate fashion by organised wandering bands). As a merely temporary expedient against a sudden danger it is possible that they were justifiable.

In 1575-76 discrimination between the vagabond and "poore and needy persons being willing to worcke" appears, and Houses of Correction are organised to facilitate the punishment of the former. According to Ashley, these were put down in most parts of England before 1596,[1] but not, he thinks, before they had to a great extent accomplished their work, and checked the very real danger which was threatening society. That this was so seems likely from the fact that in 1592-93 the severity of the Act of 1572 was somewhat relaxed, and whipping substituted for the heavier penalties. Nevertheless, hardly a year passes without some measure urging the summary punishment of vagabonds until 1597, when all previous Acts against rogues and vagabonds are repealed, a fresh definition of the class is given, and every such vagabond *found begging* is ordered to be whipped, and either passed to his last residence or birthplace, or sent to the House of Correction (not therefore legally put down). Here also is introduced the punishment of banishment or the galleys.

The famous Act 43 Eliz. is for the main part constructive, and aims at providing for Classes II., III., IV. rather than at repressing Class I.; nevertheless, it leaves in force the previous penalties, and ensures further discrimination between those to be punished and those to be helped.

The repressive policy is resumed under James I., who issued a proclamation against vagabonds, in which the penalty of banishment is ordained; and the countries specified to which incorrigible or dangerous rogues are to be banished (Newfoundland, East and West Indies, France, Germany, Spain, and the Low Countries). Mr. Ribton-Turner suggests that a large increase of vaga-

[1] They may have fallen temporarily out of use, but as we shall see, they play an important part in future legislation.

bondism called for this recurrence of legislation against it, and quotes *Stanleyes Remedye* (written in this reign, though not published until 1646), in which the number of idle vagrants is estimated at 80,000. Stanley, himself a reformed highwayman, protests against the superfluity of whipping, at any rate until after a labour test has been applied. For those who obdurately refuse work when put before them he suggests an ingenious combination of whipping and banishment—the two penalties then in favour. They should, he says, be sold to the plantations "to see whether God will turn their hearts and amend their lives" (Eden, vol. i. p. 169). In 1603-1604 an Act was passed ordaining the branding of dangerous or incorrigible rogues with a "great Roman R"; the second offence being punishable by death. It should be noted that this, as well as other Acts of a similar nature, is to continue in force only to the end of the next Parliament; it is regarded therefore as an experimental and temporary measure.

Difficulties seem to have arisen in ensuring the execution of the laws, and in 1609-1610 a new Act insists upon the building of more Houses of Correction, and ordains that if there is not before Michaelmas 1611 a House of Correction in any county, the justices of that county shall forfeit £5 apiece. Those who are consigned to the Houses of Correction "are not to be chargeable to the countrie for any allowance . . . but shall have such and so much allowance as they shall deserve by their labour and work." Actual attempts at transportation to the plantations were also made about this time in connection with the Merchant Companies; but they do not appear to have effected much. In 1614 the Lord Mayor thought he had found the real cure for the vagabonds in keeping them at work in Bridewell, "not punishing any for begging, but setting them on work, which was worse than death to them."

The constant enlisting and disbanding of troops during this century was a prolific cause of vagabondism, and led to constant legislation on the same lines. In 1628 and 1629 there was also an influx of Irish vagrants, and special

measures had to be taken for forbidding their transport into England, and shipping them back to Ireland. In 1630 it was found necessary to appoint a Royal Commission to make inquiry into the working of all laws and statutes then in force; orders were issued to the justices, and directions given for the carrying out of the statutes. Amongst these is the instruction that the Correction Houses in all counties may be made adjoining to the common prison, and the gaoler be made governor of them, so that he may have facilities for putting prisoners to work.

For twenty-six years after this it seems to have been left in the hands of local authorities to enforce the law, and to judge from the numerous proclamations issued there was considerable difficulty in doing it. No doubt the civil wars and disturbances added greatly to the difficulty of keeping order, while it was not until the comparative tranquillity of the Interregnum that the Government found leisure to repeat its legislation against vagabonds. Mr. Ribton-Turner quotes (p. 161) an Act of 1656, defining what persons fall under the penalties laid down in the Act of 1597, and ordering the enforcement of those penalties, with additional stipulation that vagabonds are to be punished even though they shall not be taken begging.

The "Act of Settlement" passed in 1662 seems to have been aimed less at the vagabond than at the labourer who tried to better his position by moving to more prosperous localities; and of its effect upon this class we shall speak later on. No doubt it also served as a weapon in harrying the vagabond from place to place. Special authority is given to the parish officials to apprehend rogues, vagrants, etc., and set them to work in the corporations or workhouses; while the justices of the peace may make a selection of such as they think should be transported to the English plantations. A new departure is also made in offering a reward for their capture, "Whereas for want of encouragement to persons apprehending vagrants, the Statutes are not duly executed; it is enacted that the justice before whom such vagrant shall be brought, may

order a reward of 2s. to the person bringing him, to be paid by the constable of such parish where the vagrant passed through unapprehended" (Burns, p. 47).

Thirty years later the vagabond had developed the highwayman, and the reward of 2s. was raised by an Act of 1692 to a gratuity of £40 for a highwayman, plus the horse, furniture, arms, and money of the robber. Of the ordinary vagrant the number certainly seems to have diminished during the century, for whereas Stanley estimated them at 80,000, Gregory King in 1688 computes them at 30,000, earning an annual income of £10 : 10s. each.

In 1700 an Act was passed repealing former laws and re-enacting them on much the same lines. The principle of settlement is brought into play, and the vagabonds are to be sent to the place of their last legal settlement, or of their birth. "The manner of conveying such person to be from county to county, and to be whipped in every county through which he is conveyed" (Burns, p. 50). Later on we find the reward for the apprehension of vagabonds increased to 10s., and a penalty of 10s. to 40s. imposed on persons harbouring them. Finally, in 1743-44, the Act of 17 George II. again repeals and re-enacts the previous laws. It begins with the usual statement with which these Acts are prefaced: "Whereas the number of rogues, vagabonds, beggars, and other idle and disorderly persons daily increases," etc., and goes on to describe the various persons and penalties in detail. It is noteworthy that the provision made for destitute wives and children has by this time created a new class of vagabond; those who run away, leaving their families to the charge of the parish, and special clauses having reference to them are introduced into these Acts (Burns, p. 52).

By this time, however, the idea was gaining ground that the only way of dealing effectually with vagabonds was to set them to work. We have already noted how one Lord Mayor discovered that work was "worse than death to them." Stanley, the highwayman, made a similar discovery, and tells the story of one Mr. Harman, a "goodly

and charitable gentleman," who ordered all the sturdy beggars who should come into the neighbourhood to be sent to him, and set them to gather stones in his grounds; "which thing, when all of the wandering Beggars and Rogues understood, they durst not one of them come begging in that parish, for feare they should be made to work." His method was to provide meat and drink and a penny a day, and "lustie stout servants to see to them." It is important to notice these instances, in which the work is obviously a penalty and a test, and not a making of employment, such as was being developed in the new workhouses (see 18 Eliz.) The Houses of Correction were for vagabonds and such of the able-bodied poor as spoiled or refused the work given out to them (apparently in their own homes) by the parish authorities. The original type of the Workhouse was the House of Correction, where the vagabond shared his penalties and his work with the petty criminal from the gaol next door. It was perhaps unfortunate that these Houses of Correction lost their distinctive character, or were superseded by the Workhouse to which descended their bad reputation without their penal discipline. Of the Workhouse as the outcome of the endeavour to find employment for the honest poor we shall now treat in dealing with Class II.

(*B*) *The Able-bodied Honest Poor.*—Legislation on behalf of this class has always been more or less under protest. Ashley (p. 366) even thinks that the numbers in it during the two centuries in question can have been but small, so slight was the attention paid to their wants; and he attributes this to the enormous development of domestic industries which made employment easy to find. But it does not seem clear that he was right on this point. Agrarian changes and social disturbances were constantly throwing numbers of labourers out of their employment, who certainly were not all absorbed again (at any rate during the sixteenth century), and who can hardly have all degenerated into the idle vagabond, against whom the penal laws were directed; and though the State was at first chary of interfering to "make work," we find between

1558 and 1760 a surprisingly large number of private schemes being aired, for the employment of the poor in lucrative industries.[1] No less than 137 publications concerning the poor are enumerated by Eden as appearing during this time, most of which contain some such scheme. It is curious that Aschrott, on the other hand, regards it as the characteristic feature of the Elizabethan Poor Law, that in it more attention is given to the provision for the able-bodied than to the care of the impotent (*Das Englische Armenwesen*, pp. 12, 13). The truth seems to lie between the two extremes. In addition to the penalties attached to vagrancy and begging, an Act had been passed in 1562 authorising any two justices of the peace (or the mayor and two aldermen) to compel all persons between twelve and sixty who were without means, to work either in the fields or at some trade, the same Act empowering the justices to fix the rate of wages (not repealed until 38 and 39 Vict.) It was little more than a logical consequence of this that in subsequent Acts the authorities were empowered to provide the employment itself, by buying "stock" whereon to set the people to work. In connection with this providing of stock it should be noticed that the difficulties attendant upon capitalist production were already beginning to make themselves felt (Cunningham, vol. i. p. 466). Complaints are made that the wealthy clothiers are engrossing the looms, encouraging unskilled labour, and lowering wages, and statutes are passed to check these evils. Any movement, therefore, of the State towards providing stock and machinery must be regarded as tending either to revert to the smaller domestic industry, or to rival the capitalists on their own ground; and it is fairly to be supposed that the statesmen of the time must have recognised this position.

Legislation on behalf of the able-bodied poor was, then, mainly incidental to the twofold endeavour to check idleness, and to make adequate provision for the impotent.

[1] Sir Matthew Hale, *Provision for the Poor*, p. 3 (1683), speaks of the poor who are able to work, and for whom work should be provided, as being far greater in number than the impotent.

So much is this the case that Burns, in his *History of the Poor Law*, classifies his summary of the Acts under three headings only: (1) those referring to servants (not properly Poor Laws in our modern sense at all, but statutes regulating wages and labour); (2) those relating to vagrants; (3) those relating to the impotent poor. The first hint we can find of provision of work for the able-bodied is in the 27 Henry VIII., where provision is ordered for the "comfort and relief of the said poor, impotent, decrepit, indigent, and needy people, and *for setting and keeping to work the able poor.*" By the 1 Ed. VI., again, the "city, town, parish or village" is ordered to provide some such work for their able-bodied poor as they may be occupied in, or to appoint them to such as will find them work for meat and drink. (The pauper, therefore, is not to work for a wage, but for a bare living.) This seems to be the origin of the "roundsman" system, under which the unemployed poor went round from house to house and were to be employed for at least one day by every householder of a certain rental (Ashley, p. 366). It is in the 18 Eliz. that the objects and conditions of legal provision of work are most clearly laid down (Burns, p. 81): "Also to the intent youth may be accustomed and brought up in labour, and then not like to grow to be idle rogues; and to the intent also that such as be already grown up in idleness, and so rogues at this present, may not have any excuse in saying that they cannot get any service or work" (*i.e.* for a test); "and that other poor and needy persons, being willing to labour, may be set on work"—the justices are instructed to provide "a competent stock of wool, hemp, flax, iron, or other stuff, as the country is most meet for." The method in which the stock is to be disposed of is also clearly laid down; it is to be delivered to the poor and needy persons, to be wrought by them within a given time, and to be paid according to the desert of the work. The system is to be self-supporting when once started, for the wrought stock is to be sold at some market or other place, and more stuff bought with the money coming of the sale "*in such wise*

as the stock shall not be decayed in value." No mention is made of a workhouse, but Houses of Correction are to be provided for those who refuse the work, or "taking such work shall spoil or imbesil the same"; also for the punishment of vagabonds.

The 43 Eliz. merely repeats former instructions with regard to the able-bodied poor, for the clause authorising the provision of necessary places of habitation seems to apply to the impotent poor only.[1] The directions issued by Privy Council in 1630 contain two interesting clauses: (1) "That the Lords of manoures and townes take care that their tenants, and the parishioners of every towne, may be relieved by worke, or otherwise at home, and not suffered to straggle and beg up and downe in their parish" (thus throwing the responsibility on the landowners); and (4) "That the Statute of Labourers, for retaining of servants, and ordering of wages between the servant and the master, be not deluded by private contracts, before they come to the statutes; and the common fashion of assoynging many absent, not to be allowed of course, as is used."

The next legislation directly affecting the interests of this class appears in the famous Settlements Act, 13 and 14 Ch. II. This begins, "Whereas by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock, the largest commons or wastes to build cottages, and the most woods for them to burn and destroy; and when they have consumed it, then to another parish, and at last become rogues and vagabonds, to *the great discouragement of parishes to provide stocks where it is liable to be devoured by strangers.*" It would appear from this that it is not the true industrial stock of the community which is to be defended by the Acts of Settlement, but the stock which is artificially provided by law; and,

[1] Sir Matthew Hale (1683) says that the law makes no provision for workhouses.

indeed, it could only be the legal obligation to set to work upon the stock persons incapable of making a profitable use of it, which would make the multiplication of labourers in any parish a hardship. Aschrott regards it as legislation in the interest of rich districts, from which the poor are to be kept at a distance. It seems more natural to regard it as legislation on behalf of the landowners, upon whom fell the chief burden of the rates (Sir Matthew Hale, p. 7; see also *ante*, p. 23), and who would resent the migration of the poor from districts where provision for them was neglected to districts where it was enforced. Pashley (*Poor Law and Pauperism*, p. 223) points out that "the neglect to carry out the provision of the statute of Elizabeth during the interval between 1601 and 1662 would be likely to produce a considerable difference in the burden of pauperism in different parts of the country," and on p. 221 he quotes from Dekker's *Greevous Grones for the Poore* (1622), that there had been no collection for the poor, "no, not these seven yeares, in many parishes of this land, especiallie in countrie townes."

The principle of Settlement is as old as the fourteenth century, when many regulations were made to prevent the labourers wandering in search of work (Ashley, p. 334); but throughout the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century it was only vagabonds or those who actually became a burden who could be legally removed to their last settlement or birthplace. The Act of 1662 authorises such removal in the case of any person "*likely to be chargeable*" to the parish, unless he gave sufficient security. The newcomer was safe if he occupied a tenement of the yearly value of £10 or over, but Pashley points out that a rent of £10 in 1662 is equivalent to one of £50 in the present currency, so that the exception does not really protect the labourer at all. That the Act worked as a real oppression is obvious from the fact that poor people were wont to conceal themselves for the forty days after their arrival, during which they were removable, thus necessitating an Act in 1685 ordaining that the forty days should be counted from the time they gave notice to the

overseers of their residence, and another in 1691[1] ordering such notice to be read in church. It is curious that while this Act of 1662 made the enforcement of removals more stringent and burdensome, it also made the settlement easier to obtain. Originally a person had his settlement in the place where he last abode by the space of three years, or in his birthplace; in the reign of James I. the three years were diminished to one, and by the Act of 1662 forty days were sufficient to constitute a settlement.[2]

It is difficult to produce evidence as to how far these restrictions on the free movements of the labourer were an industrial evil. Eden thinks that the hardships imposed by them upon the poor have been exaggerated (vol. i. p. 298), and that a respectable man could find his security. That they would cause great inequalities in the rates of wages seems *a priori* certain; and we find Defoe pointing out in 1704 that whereas in Kent a poor man will earn 7s., 10s., or 9s. a week, in the north he will earn 4s. or perhaps less. Richard Dunning, also, in 1685 calculates that a Devonshire day labourer could earn 5d. a day all the year round, and his diet, which he estimates at 5d. a day more. But these differences are hardly more striking than could be cited for different parts of the country at the present day, even if we confine ourselves to agricultural labourers. Pashley, however, quotes (p. 238) the preamble to an Act in 1696 as proving incontrovertibly how injurious the statute of Charles II. had proved in its influence on the distribution of labour. "Forasmuch as many poor persons, chargeable to the parish, township, or place where they live, merely for want of work, would in any other place, where sufficient employment is to be had, maintain themselves without being burthensome . . . they are for the most part confined to live in their own parishes, townships, or places, and not

[1] See Fowle, p. 64. The same Act dispenses with written notices in the case of those who execute any public annual office, pay rates for a year, or are legally hired or apprenticed; but in 1722 it is ordained that rates paid to the scavenger shall not suffice to constitute a legal settlement.

[2] Burns, p. 108.

permitted to inhabit elsewhere, though their labour is wanted in many other places, where the increase of manufacture would employ more hands." The Act then provides that the penalties of removal may be avoided by the production of a certificate from the churchwarden, overseers, and two justices of the last settlement, which would make the possessor irremovable until he became actually chargeable.

The first suggestion of workhouses as places in which the respectable poor should be set to work seems to have come from Stanley, the reformed highwayman (1646). He protests against the injustice of punishing people for being idle without first offering them work, and urges that houses and convenient places should be provided to set the poor to work. . . . "Surely many of them would go to work if such houses were provided for them." This ignoring of the legal provision for employing the poor seems to point to the fact that the authorities had allowed this part of their work to fall into abeyance, possibly because they found it impossible to keep their stock intact when competing with capitalist production on an increasingly larger scale.

Whether Stanley intended his workhouses as places of residence is not clear. Sir Matthew Hale renews the idea in his *Discourse touching Provision for the Poor*, 1683, and certainly means them only as places to which the poor shall resort to work, just as they do to the mill or factory of to-day. Probably the change from giving out work to the poor in their own homes to gathering them together in a workhouse, was merely intended to enable the work provided by law to keep pace with that of private enterprise, which was already beginning to develop the factory system. A master is to be appointed, who is to supervise the work, and can be authorised by a justice of the peace to chastise defaulters by imprisonment or moderate correction within the Workhouse. Hale goes minutely into the financial prospects of such an institution, and is very optimistic in his calculations. Not only is the stock to maintain itself, but the wages to be paid will set the rate

for covetous masters in hard times who strive to take advantage of the poor. The Workhouse is to be a refuge where they can be employed at reasonable wages. At the worst, he argues, even if there is loss in the system, it will be as cheap as maintaining the poor under the present system, while the education in habits of work will more than countervail the loss of a very considerable stock, especially as the Workhouse will serve also as a school for the children, and a test for wanderers and beggars.

An elaborate scheme was also drawn up by Sir Josiah Child for London, Westminster, and Southwark, which includes the provision of workhouses, and a similar suggestion was made in a pamphlet published in 1687, four years later, by Thomas Firmin, "Some Proposals for the Employing of the Poor, especially in and about the City of London, and for the Prevention of Begging." Burns also quotes seven other schemes for employing the poor.

No legislation, however, followed these suggestions until after the new commissioners, in 1696, were ordered "to consider of proper methods for setting on work and employing the poor, and making them useful to the public" (Mr. E. C. Price, *The Poor Law and the Unemployed*). The next year a special Act of Parliament was passed for establishing a workhouse in the city of Bristol, much upon the lines proposed by Sir Josiah Child. This experiment seems to have been the special venture of a certain Mr. Cary, and he writes of it about 1700 (Burns, p. 181) that it had "very good success, insomuch that there was not a common beggar, or disorderly vagrant, to be seen in the streets." Adverse critics, however, were not wanting, and Eden (p. 281) quotes one: "From their first erection in the year 1696 to the year 1714, they continued to put the poor to work—I mean, those they had in their workhouse called the Mint. And they tried them upon a great many different sorts of work, to make them useful toward their support, but not only without any benefit from their labour but to the great loss of the Corporation. For as soon as they came to do anything tolerably well, that they might have been assisting to the younger and less practised,

they went off to sea, or were apprenticed in the city; by which means the public were so far benefited, though the Corporation bore the loss of the charge of teaching them, and of all the tools with which they were to work, and of the materials for it. For they made nothing perfect or merchantable from their work, but only spoiled the materials. So that instead of lessening the charge of maintaining the poor, they increased it. . . ." They then gave up the work and merely contracted the labour out to a gentleman, "for whom they made sacks for a small gratuity, being maintained by the public." Eden says: "It appears from this account that the way by which the magistrates of Bristol reduced the charges of maintaining the poor, was by driving away paupers who were not settled in that city." Writing in 1700, Cary recommends the establishment of similar houses over the country as a test, and not as commercial enterprises. "Nor should these houses hinder any who desire to work at home, or the manufacturers from employing them; the design being to provide places for those who care not to work anywhere, and to make the parish officers more industrious to find them out, when they know whither to send them; by which means they would be better able to maintain the impotent." They were, therefore, to take the place of the old Houses of Correction. But though three years' experience had taught Cary the right function of a workhouse, the idea of a labour test was certainly not the one uppermost in a Bill introduced into Parliament in 1704 (Pashley, p. 243). "The object of this proposed legislation was a complete organisation of labour, by establishing great parochial manufactories and raising capital by poor-rates, in order to carry on in each such manufactory a trade in which paupers might be employed as labourers. The wild scheme met with the complete approbation of the House of Commons, and was passed there with great applause, but was rejected by the other House." It was the occasion for Defoe's celebrated pamphlet, "Giving Alms no Charity," in which he points out very forcibly the disastrous consequences likely to result from the diverting of

industry from its natural channels in favour of the least efficient members of the community. Nevertheless, an Act was passed in 1720, prohibiting the use of printed calicoes, in order to effectually employ the poor in the silk and woollen manufactures.

Special Acts authorised the establishment of workhouses in six towns (Bristol, Worcester, Plymouth, Exeter, Hull, and Norwich),[1] and the General Act of 1722 authorises their erection in all parishes, and provides that relief may be refused to all who decline to be lodged in such houses. The "offer of the house" is therefore definitely made a test of destitution. Eden gives an interesting account of the effects of this policy (vol. i. pp. 260 *sqq.*), quoting the expenditure of several parishes. That of St. Andrew's, Holborn, is typical. The Workhouse there was opened in June 1727. Before that period the poor rate was £1000 per annum; before 1730 it was reduced to £750; while in 1776 it had risen to £1329. The reason for this rise may be found in another change of policy; towards the end of the century the idea of admission to the Workhouse being used as a test seems to have been almost entirely lost sight of, to judge from the Regulations for the Relief of the Poor of St. Giles, Bloomsbury, issued in 1781. In these "it is earnestly recommended to the officers to consider the Workhouse only as an asylum for the aged, for orphans in an infant state, for idiots, lunatics, and the lame, blind, sick, or otherwise infirm and diseased persons; and that no persons who are able to earn a livelihood . . . should be admitted into or be permitted to remain therein." It is reasonable to suppose that before the change in policy could be so definitely formulated it had already been for some time practised.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, therefore, the Workhouse approaches more nearly to being a hospital for the impotent and a refuge for the infirm and children, than to either the Houses of Correction or the industrial schools from which they developed.

[1] There seems also to have been a "house of maintainence" for St. Giles and St. George.

(*C*) *Poor Law Provision for Children.*—The importance of industrial education has never been wholly lost sight of, however inadequate such education may at times have been. Of education in any wider sense of the word we find little trace. Pashley (p. 244) thinks that some idea of educating the poor was current in the early part of the eighteenth century, and quotes Mandeville as arguing in 1714 against such education, on the ground that "Going to school in comparison to working is idleness; and the longer boys continue in this easy sort of life the more unfit they will be, when grown up, for downright labour, both as to strength and inclination." It is interesting to find an Act for the protection of children so early as the 3 and 4 Ed. VI. (1551), in which it is enacted "that if any men and women going a-begging do carry children about with them, any person may take such child, above the age of five years and under fourteen, to be brought up in any honest labour and occupation; if a woman-child, until the age of fifteen years, 'or be married'; if a man-child, to the age of eighteen." The same order is made in 14 Eliz., only that the age to which the child may be kept is raised—for a girl to eighteen, for a boy to twenty-four.

With respect to illegitimate children it is established in Elizabeth's earlier legislation that they shall be kept by the parish, but that the justices shall have power to make a weekly or other charge upon the child's parents.

By the 39 Eliz. the overseers are ordered to set to work "the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children." Or "to bind such children to be apprentices, where they shall see convenient, till such man-child shall come to the age of twenty-four years, and such woman-child till the age of twenty-one." By the end of the century difficulties seem to have arisen in finding persons willing to receive the children as apprentices, for it is ordered that unless the persons to whom they are appointed shall receive and provide for them they shall forfeit £10.

The 43 Eliz. emphasises the principle of parental and filial responsibility: "Where, in the former Act, it is said

that parents or children, being of ability, shall maintain such poor persons respectively, it is here expressed that the father and grandfather, and the mother and grandmother, and the children, of every such poor person shall maintain them" (Burns, p. 93).

When children were first consigned to the Workhouse instead of being boarded out does not appear clear. That grave evils attended both systems is obvious from an Act passed in 1762, ordering the registration and periodical revision of "all poor infants under four years of age," as means of preserving the lives of such infants. What was the extent of the evil hinted at in this Act we may learn from a pamphlet published by the governors of the parish of St. James, Westminster, 1797. It is called, "Sketch of the State of the Children of the Poor in the year 1756, and of the Present State and Management of all the Poor in the Parish of St. James, Westminster, in January 1797." The "Sketch" is so brief that it may be quoted in full:—

"In the year 1756 the Honourable House of Commons required an account from every Parish within the Bills of Mortality of the Number of Children they had respectively brought up, and placed out as Apprentices, by which it appeared that only *Seven* Children had been brought up and placed out by all the Parishes, 147 in Number. In an Account delivered at the same Time by the Governors of the Foundling Hospital, they boasted to have lost only 75 per Cent per Annum of the Children entrusted to their care."

The pamphlet goes on to describe how, under the Act of 1662, the governors withdrew the children "mouldering away in the Workhouse," and after much search and great difficulty found several cottagers on Wimbledon Common who were fit to be trusted with the children, and who were bribed to keep them alive by premiums on every illness which they survived.

(*D*) *The Provision for the Aged and Impotent Poor* has always been the first care of the community since Poor Law legislation began. Adopted at first as a religious virtue it was afterwards accepted as a civic duty, and from

the latter point of view, considerations of policy and of unselfish charity came to light which had been gradually lost sight of as almsgiving had come to be more and more practised for the sake of the donor's salvation. It was the State which reintroduced the principle of discrimination which had been entirely lost sight of by the Church. The loving care of the poor, voluntarily exercised by religious organisations, which Ratzinger[1] regards as the true type of religious almsgiving, had long been superseded by the inadequate and indiscriminate scattering of doles, when in 1536 the State first ordained that the poor of every place should be succoured, found and kept, by way of voluntary charity, "in such wise as none of them of very necessity shall be compelled to go openly in begging," on pain that every parish making default forfeit 20s. a month (27 H. VIII.) (Before that the only legal provision made was the granting of begging licenses.) Several subsequent Acts repeat these instructions, with directions as to the best methods of carrying them out, and in 1572 (14 Eliz.) still fuller provision is ensured by instructions to all the justices of the peace to search out "all aged, poor, impotent, and decayed persons to register their names in a book, and to assign to them convenient places of habitation." It is in this Act that we first find a clause inserted, forbidding "any diseased or impotent poor person, living on alms, to repair to the city of Bath, or town of Buckstone, to the baths there, for ease of their grief, unless they be licensed so to do by two justices, and be provided for by the inhabitants from whence they came of such relief towards their maintenance, as shall be necessary for the time of their abode and return home again." This clause constantly appears in subsequent Acts, and poor persons going to Bath Hospital still have to get their papers signed by two Guardians and deposit £3 caution money.

By the 35 Eliz. a special rate is ordered for the maintenance of such as have adventured their lives and lost their limbs in the defence and service of her Majesty and the State; and by the 39 Eliz. an important step is taken

[1] *Geschichte der Kirchlichen Armenpflege.*

in authorising a rate for the erection of convenient houses of dwelling for the impotent poor, in each of which are to be placed "inmates, or more families than one." In 1601 it is expressly stipulated that these cottages shall not be used for any other habitation, but only for the impotent and poor.

How far these provisions for the impotent poor—adequate enough in themselves—were actually carried out it is difficult to say; there is no further legislation of any importance on their behalf until 1691. By that time the idea of keeping a register of those to be "put upon the collection" seems to have been forgotten, and it is renewed by the 3 Will. III. in consequence of the misspending of public money by the officials. A few years later further precautions were found necessary, and it was ordered that every person put upon the collection should wear the badge of a large Roman P in red or blue cloth.

The legislation for the next fifty years is mainly connected with difficulties of administration calling for increased control over Poor Law officials. But by 1729 overseers may purchase or hire houses for the lodging, keeping, and employing of the poor; two or more parishes may join in hiring such a house (here is the beginning of the Union); and the overseers, where such house shall be hired or purchased, may, by agreement, take in the poor of any other parish or place. This seems to have been the point from which the Workhouse came to be amalgamated with the house for the impotent poor, in such wise that our modern Workhouse really represents three distinct institutions—the House of Correction, the parish workshop, and the almshouse. In the Report of St. Giles already quoted (p. 215), we see how, in 1781, the almshouse view was indeed the predominant one.

(*E*) *The Administration of the Poor Law.*—From the very commencement of legal provision for the poor, it has been found constantly necessary to re-enforce, and generally to reconstruct to some extent, the machinery by which it is to be administered. The duty is at first divided between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The penal part of the administration is left to the justices of the peace, and

in Henry VIII.'s reign it is the justices who have power to grant begging licenses. By the 27 H. VIII. (see p. 208) all the head officers of every city, shire, towns, and parishes are to most charitably receive their poor, all governors and ministers are to relieve them, and the whole parish is made responsible under penalty of a forfeit. All preachers also are to exhort people to be liberal in giving to the common box (private almsgiving of the nature of "common or open doles" is prohibited except to travellers, who may give by the roadside to the lame, blind, sick, aged, or impotent people), and the churchwardens are to keep watch over the collector that he does not "imbezil" the money. Books are to be kept of the money collected, and how it is spent; and two or three times a week certain of the paupers, appointed by the mayor, governor, or constable, are to collect broken meat and refuse for distribution. In so far as this work should interfere with the ordinary business of collectors, churchwardens, etc., they are to receive from the money collected such competent wages as the civil authorities may appoint; and they shall not remain in office more than one year. The overplus of rich parishes is to be distributed among poor parishes in the same district. That the office of collector was not an enviable one, we may learn from the fact that it was soon found necessary to impose a fine upon those who refused to serve, rising from 10s. to £10.

This heavy fine was imposed by the 5 Eliz. in 1563, when it had become evident that voluntary charity did not respond adequately to the requirements made of it by the State. By this Act is ordained that on the Sunday before midsummer day notice shall be given to parishioners to prepare themselves on the Sunday next following to come to the church, and there to choose collectors for the poor. Besides imposing a fine as penalty for refusal to serve, provision is made for compelling a collector to render his accounts to the dignitaries of the church in company with a justice of the peace. Those who decline to give are also dealt with, and if any one "of his froward willful mind shall obstinately refuse to give weekly according to

his ability," he is to be exhorted by the various dignitaries of the church in ascending scale, and finally, if these prove unavailing, the obstinate person is to be assessed by the justice of the peace and the churchwardens according to their good discretions. As the penalty for continued refusal is committal to gaol, it is clear that we have here a compulsory, and not a voluntary, maintenance of the poor. The first registration of the poor took place, as we have already seen, in 1572, and was to be carried out by the civil officers. The object was to ascertain the number of poor within each "division," and that being done, to set down (having regard to the number) the weekly amount required for their relief within each division. They are then to assess every inhabitant within the division with the amount he is to contribute weekly, and register each with the amount he is to pay. They are also to appoint collectors and overseers, the latter to forfeit 10s. if they refuse to serve. Collectors are to account half-yearly to the justices. The whole system is thus become compulsory, and is transferred to the hands of the civil authorities. Provision is made, however, for appeal to the justices of the bench at the next general session, should any one "find himself grieved" by virtue of this Act (Burns, pp. 77 *sqq.*)

This method of adapting the rate to the needs of the parish appears to have been neglected later on in favour of a fixed, and often insufficient rate, for among the Orders and Directions issued in 1630 by Privy Council we find one as follows:—

"That the weekely taxations for the reliefe of the Poore, and other purposes mentioned in the 43rd Eliz., bee, in these times of scarcitie, raised to higher rates in every parish, than in times tofore were used; and contributions had from other parishes to help the weaker parishes, especially from those places where depopulations have been, some good contribution to come, for helpe of other parishes. And where any money, or stocke, hath beene, or shall be given to the relief of the Poore in any parish, such gift to be no occasion of lessening the rates of the parish."

With the introduction of employment for the poor came the necessity for appointing "governors" to supervise the work, and look after the stock (these again to be appointed by the justices), and "wardens" to rule over the Houses of Correction. In the same Act (18 Eliz.) an attempt is made to encourage private charity by providing that any one who, within the next twenty years, should give any lands, tenements, or hereditaments towards setting the people to work, should do so without license of mortmain.

By the 39 Eliz. it is further enacted that the churchwardens of every parish and four substantial householders shall be nominated overseers of the poor by the justices. They are to meet at least once a month in the church after divine service, "there to consider of some good course to be taken." If any parish is unable to support its own poor, the justices may tax any other parishes to contribute. The compelling power still rests with the justices, who may commit to gaol any one refusing to contribute, or any overseers who refuse to "account," or any poor who refuse to work.

In this way was constituted the full machinery for carrying out the Elizabethan Poor Law. How far it proved sufficient for its purpose is doubtful. Pashley writes (p. 220): "It appears probable that the proper carrying out of the provisions of this statute (43 Eliz.) was greatly neglected, and that, for twenty, thirty, or forty years after its passing there were many parishes in which no such poor-rates as it required to be laid were ever made at all; it is even said that many poor people perished for want. . . . And it seems clear that before the restoration of Charles II. the unpaid annual officers, under whose care the poor were placed by the statute of Elizabeth, had not only failed to raise proper funds for relieving the impotent, but still more had neglected to carry out the parochial organisation of labour which the statute contemplated. Able-bodied applicants for relief obtained some allowance in money without being put to work at all."

We find corroboratory evidence of the failure of officials

(both high and low) to fulfil their functions properly in the "Orders" issued by Privy Council in 1630. The first of these provides for a monthly meeting of justices of the peace, before whom shall assemble the high constables, petty constables, churchwardens, and overseers, and inquiry be made as to how each of these officers have done their duties. If any infringement of the law is discovered, a fine is to be imposed, of which part is to go to the informant. To ensure that justices of the peace are themselves diligent and careful the justices of assize in every circuit are to make careful inquiries about them. It was the justices of assize who were responsible for the whole system, who held it together, and who, when it broke down—as it did during the Civil War—were charged with the duty of reconstructing it.

Inderwick, writing about the justice of assize (*The Interregnum*, p. 173), says: "He was, as it were, a grand guardian to the poor, and as such heard petitions from poor people who complained of the non-administration of parish relief, and at every assize town he heard and decided disputed settlements of paupers." The judges, after the Civil War, "found the country without coroners, justices, constables, overseers, or churchwardens. . . . The poor-rates had not been collected for years. . . . Men had refused to be constables or churchwardens, so that the few existing constables were old and useless. . . . Of the justices of the peace, not more than 10 per cent had been sworn into office, so that those who acted were few in number and mostly old." The justices of assize, therefore, had to completely reconstruct the machinery of the Poor Law, and they appear to have done it with energy and wisdom.

Sir Josiah Child, in his *Discourse upon Trade*, written in the reign of Charles II. (see Burns, pp. 160 *sqq.*), argues that the failure of the Poor Laws is due to their own defects, and not to bad administration. "But if it be retorted upon me that, by my own confession, much of this mischief happens by the ill execution of the laws, I say, better execution of them than you have seen you must not expect, and there never was a good law made that

was not well executed, the fault of the law causing a failure of execution." We may admit some force in this argument, provided that we can ensure honesty of purpose in all administrators, but how far this is from being the case may be illustrated from the 3 W., 1691. This Act declares that "many inconveniences do daily arise in cities, towns corporate, and parishes, where the inhabitants are very numerous, by reason of the unlimited power of the churchwardens and overseers, who do frequently, upon frivolous pretences (but chiefly for their own private ends), give relief to what persons and number they think fit"; and then goes on to ordain a register to be kept and renewed annually of all persons receiving relief; none but those put on the register to receive relief except by order of the justices. (A further check was introduced afterwards in the wearing of a pauper badge by all recipients.) It is curious to note here how Poor Law history is forgotten and repeats itself over and over again. Early in Elizabeth's reign the necessity for a register had already been felt, and provision made for keeping of one in every parish. A hundred years later this is apparently quite forgotten, though many of the old registers must still have been in existence.

The prohibition of relief to non-registered persons except by authority of the justices was quickly construed by the justices into permission to give relief to non-registered persons without knowledge of the parish officers; and in 1729 an Act was passed to oblige them to communicate with the officials before ordering relief—a measure which does not seem to have had much effect in checking them in the abuse of their power. The worst evils arising from this occurred, however, after 1760; and this is also the case with another clause of the same Act (9 G.), which allowed overseers to "contract with any person for the lodging, keeping, and employing their poor." The changes in the Poor Law which led ultimately to the degradation of the labouring classes, revealed in the Report of the Poor Law Commission of 1834, were already initiated in 1760. In 1796 the fatal step was taken of abolishing the Workhouse test, and

of making poverty instead of destitution the qualification for relief. From this time forward the able-bodied pauper became the chief object of Poor Law relief, often to the cruel neglect of the impotent, aged, and children. Poor Law officials had no time nor thought for the proper supervision of workhouses, when they were being constantly besieged by troops of threatening men, urging their claims to have their wages supplemented by the parish allowance, and nearly always able to get a magistrate's order to support them. The office of overseer became so onerous, and even dangerous, that it became the practice to elect a man for a few months only; and in this way even the advantage of experience was lost. Poor Law expenditure quickly doubled and trebled itself, and the country had nothing to show for it but the creation of a demoralised people, who found it paid better to be idle, thriftless paupers than sober, independent workmen. For the former were sure of constant employment when they chose to work, of a "minimum" wage, and of a fixed allowance for every child; while the latter were turned adrift from their employment to make room for the pauper, whose wages would be partly paid from the rates, and had no remedy until all the savings of their industry were exhausted, and they in turn declared themselves paupers.

XIV

SOME CONTROVERTED POINTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF POOR RELIEF[1]

By C. S. Loch

It may be of interest to readers of the *Economic Journal*, if I discuss somewhat more fully than has yet been done the views expressed by Professor Marshall on the subject of the Poor Law and Poor Relief in the March and September numbers of the Journal last year.[2] I do not propose to myself to examine them all exhaustively, but to pick out a few statements and to set against them evidence which appears to me to be entitled to consideration.

Statement I.

"The principle that public relief should be adjusted simply to the indigence of the applicant has remained without substantial change during sixty years in which our views on most social problems have changed much. It had its origin in the great dread that overspread the nation as a result of the ruinous folly of the old Poor Law."

The principle that public relief should be administered

[1] From the *Economic Journal* for September and December 1893.

[2] For a further statement of Professor Marshall's views on this subject see his speech at the last meeting of the British Economic Association, *Economic Journal*, No. 11, p. 389. Note by Editor of *Economic Journal*.

according to the destitution of the applicant and not on the ground of poverty did not originate in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. It is to be found in the Act of Queen Elizabeth, a departure from the terms of which was one chief reason for "the ruinous folly," etc. That Act provides for setting to work the children of those who shall not be thought able to keep and maintain them—destitute children; for the setting to work of persons having no means to maintain themselves—destitute persons; and for "the necessary relief" of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other as are poor and not able to work—that is, "relief" adjusted to indigence. The principle has then been in force not for sixty, but for almost 300 years. If this contention be doubted I would venture to quote the following extract of a cross-examination made by Sir James Graham in 1837:—

"Is it your opinion that either the old law, from Elizabeth downwards, of relief, or the present law, was intended to make character the test of relief?" "Yes, in a great measure, of the kind of relief that was to be given."

"Where do you find any traces of that, that destitution should not be the test, and that character and merit should be the test of relief?" "I think that it has always been the understanding, that, if a man of good character applied for relief, you would relieve him, if you had the power, in a different way from what you would relieve a man of bad character. The man of bad character, who spends his money improperly, you would relieve, but just enough to keep him from starvation; but the man of good character you would relieve in a different way. That was the case under the old law."

"Would you hold that, under this discretion, less than the necessaries of life should be given to a man of bad character?" "No; but I think to a man of good character, rather more than the necessaries of life should be given."

"Where do you find, from the earliest statutes of Elizabeth down to the latest statute, that more than the necessaries of life should be given to a destitute man of good character?" "I cannot find it in any statute, I am aware, but that was the practice."

The witness was the Vice-Chairman of a Board of Guardians and a practising solicitor.[1]

In the last sixty years, while the principle of Poor Law administration has remained substantially the same, it has been applied very differently as "our views on most social problems have changed." This has shown itself especially in the treatment of children, of the sick, and of the afflicted. Since 1834 the Poor Law School system, and subsequently the district and separate school system have been established. Any one who glances at John Locke's pamphlet will note the difference between the old "setting to work" of children and the education introduced into our large Poor Law

[1] "It is our painful duty to report" (so write the Commissioners of 1834) "that in the greater part of the districts which we have been able to examine, the fund, which the 43rd of Elizabeth directed to be employed in setting to work children and persons capable of labour, but using no daily trade, and in the necessary relief of the impotent, is applied to purposes opposed to the latter, and still more to the spirit of that law, and destructive to the morals of the most numerous class, and to the welfare of all." Elsewhere they say, "The outdoor relief of which we have recommended the abolition is in general partial relief, which, as we have intimated, is at variance with the spirit of 43rd of Elizabeth, for the framers of that Act could scarcely have intended that the overseers should 'take order for setting to work' those who have work, and are engaged in work; nor could they by the words, 'all persons using *no* ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by,' have intended to describe persons 'who *do* use an ordinary and daily trade of life.'" These passages represent the view of the Commissioners, that they were reverting to a truer interpretation of the Act of Queen Elizabeth, and to a more consistent application of it. Against this, however, might be alleged the argument that the Act seems to mention five objects: (1) To set children to work; (2) to set persons having no means, etc., to work; (3) to raise money for stock, etc., to set the poor on work; (4) to provide competent sums for the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, etc.; and (5) for apprenticeship. Evidently the third object was considered by the Commissioners only as a complement to, and a means of providing for, the first and second, not as representing a third and separate purpose—the setting to work of "the poor," as distinguished from necessitous children, and those who had no means or daily trade, since, without this general instruction to raise funds, the overseers could not have incurred the cost of setting these two classes to work. It is well, perhaps, to mention this, as otherwise it might be thought that the Commissioners had overlooked what to some readers would appear to be a third object—the setting to work of the class "poor." And thus the contention that the doctrine of destitution did not originate with the Act of Queen Elizabeth, but with them, so far as "the poor" are concerned, might seem to have some justification.

institutions on the Bell and Lancaster plans before the "New Poor Law" was passed, and then the onward progress from Dr. Kay's time to our own. The treatment of the sick has greatly altered. The infirmary is frequently a hospital (sometimes a very spacious and exceptionally fine hospital) with trained nurses and modern appliances of every kind: and the change in this direction is continuous. The treatment of lunatics is very greatly improved: for idiots and imbeciles much is done that formerly was not attempted, and for the blind, deaf and dumb, and deformed there is ample opportunity given to the Guardians to provide in charitable homes and institutions under special supervision and instruction. Members of Friendly Societies also (to mention another class) have certain privileges. Should the member of such a society become a pauper his club money is payable to his wife or dependent relation. It can hardly be said, therefore, that public relief is "adjusted simply to the indigence of the applicant." The principle remains, and rightly remains, as I venture to think, but in certain important directions legislation has greatly modified its application. And there has been no stagnation in Poor Law administration. Probably there has been as much progress in it during the last twenty years as in any other branch of public work. If evidence on this point is desired, it can, in my opinion, be produced in overwhelming abundance.

STATEMENT II.

"The great men who prepared the 1834 Report set themselves to consider, as they were bound to do, not what was the most perfect scheme conceivable, but which of those plans, which were not radically vicious or unjust, was the most workable by the comparatively uneducated officials on whom they had to depend. They found that in a few parishes poor relief had been given only under conditions and in ways that were distasteful alike to the just and the unjust. They asserted, and doubtless they were right, that in these parishes, people had become more industrious and more frugal: that their wages had risen

and their discontent abated, and that their moral and social condition had in every way improved. Accordingly, they submitted as the general principle of legislation on this subject in the present condition of the country, that those modes of administering relief which had been tried wholly or partially and had produced effects in some districts, be introduced with modifications according to local circumstances and carried into complete execution in all."

The Commissioners' Report was pre-eminently a collection of facts. Other committees of inquiry had "collected a vast deal of valuable information as to opinions on the subject, but, not so much as to the facts connected with it, though," as Lord Althorp said, "the latter species of information was by far the more important of the two, and was indispensably necessary to guide the legislature to anything like a safe and sound system of reformation." Evidence "greatly deficient in facts while it was abundantly contaminated with opinions and theories," did not suit Lord Althorp's ways of thinking.

Without doubt the Commissioners did not search after "the most perfect scheme conceivable"; nor did they use material "abundantly contaminated with opinions and theories." On the other hand, they did not rest satisfied with plans "not radically vicious and unjust, etc." They founded their case on evidence "from about a hundred parishes, in which an improved system had been either entirely or partially adopted." It had been tried in districts "in every part of the country," "in some districts even that had been extensively pauperised; and in every one of them the experiment had succeeded as far as it had been already tried."

Nor was the poor relief in these districts "given only under conditions and in ways that were distasteful alike to the just and the unjust." It was realised that the fatal cause of pauperism was the principle laid down in 36 Geo. III. "that the relief to paupers ought to be given them in such a manner as to place them in a situation of comfort." But no less was it urged that the old and infirm should be

treated with great consideration. Changes were to be introduced gradually. The system of Poor Law orders was specially adopted with that object. The instructions of the Commissioners to relieving officers were as follows:—

"Each of the Union officers should" (the Commissioners wrote) "be especially cautioned as to his conduct toward the claimants of relief; he should be reminded that it is his duty to treat the sick, the aged and infirm, with tenderness and care; that many of the claims which it will be his duty to reject, have been created by abuses heretofore prevalent, and that in rejecting even such claims he must not use harsh language or show an angry deportment. He must so conduct himself as to obtain the respect and confidence of the claimants of relief." Further, a "protecting power" was placed by the Poor Law Amendment Act in the hands of magistrates, by any two of whom outdoor relief to aged persons, wholly unable to support themselves, might be ordered. "It has scarcely ever been necessary" (it was reported by a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1837) "to have recourse to this provision of the Act, the considerate spirit in which the Boards of Guardians perform their duties rendering it unnecessary."

Further, the administration and supply of medical relief was to be improved. There were to be good and sufficient, but not lavish or wasteful, dietaries. Classification was insisted on and extended.

It is hard to understand how to the just labourer the new policy could be distasteful.

Let me give one instance out of many—I take the period with which we are concerned—just before the introduction of the new Poor Law.

In 1831, it is argued by Mr. T. J. B. Estcourt, M.P., a trustworthy witness, after submission of figures showing the results of better administration at Radcliffe-on-Trent, that with the withdrawal of the system of allowances in aid of wages, the farmers "would be obliged to give as much as any person in the neighbourhood would give," "not that

which is much less than the labour of a good workman." "The consequence of this would be, that if the farmer found that he had not the means by law of retaining in his service an unfortunate labourer at inadequate wages, and that he was obliged to give a very considerable sum of money, he would of course determine within himself that he would employ no person that he could not depend on; and when a man came to him for employment, the first question that he would ask of him would be, where he came from, and who there is that would answer for his character. The moment we have arrived at that point, character would be of some value." And in 1837, after the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, one grievance which was removed was that by which inferior labourers, owing to their allowances, had sometimes been better off than superior ones. This can hardly be called administration conducted under conditions distasteful to the just.

Again Mr. Becher in 1831, quoting what he had written some years before about Southwell—one of the unions where the allowance system had been stopped—says, "In distributing the parochial funds it (our system) takes into consideration the character and conduct of the person applying for relief; it discriminates carefully between the innocent, idle, the profligate, the sturdy, and the criminal claimants; it protects even the victims of their own follies and companions." The system which was thus carefully worked and which produced as a result "a rise in wages, an abatement of discontent and improved moral and social conditions" could hardly be distasteful to the just. It is, indeed, quite clear that the juster portion of the labouring classes accepted the new Poor Law, not only as inevitable, but as desirable; and they accepted it because it was just. Thus, to quote two sentences by way of illustration, in July 1835 it is reported in regard to Sussex: "The Bill advances in popularity and in the good liking not only of the rate-payers, but of the independent labourer and those of the poor whose real necessities have made them dependent upon parish relief." And in 1837, in the northern counties, the labouring classes "acknowledge the advan-

tages of the law, and, to use their own words, they 'see now that it's only the idle drunken vagabonds that are going to be hurt by it.'"

In the statement under discussion stress is laid on the words "in the present condition of the country," as if the Commissioners intended to propose a principle not applicable to the normal administration of the Poor Law. But this is to give a wrong meaning to the words, as the Report itself shows. The Commissioners refer to two "principles." The first is general. "The first and most essential of all conditions, a principle *which we find universally admitted*, even by those whose practice is at variance with it, is, that the situation (of the person relieved) shall not on the whole be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class." This principle underlay the measures which had been adopted in various districts, and had produced the six satisfactory results which the Commissioners enumerate. The second principle they refer to thus: They have, they state, been "warned at every part of the inquiry by the failure of previous legislation," and "they will not," therefore, "in the suggestion of specific remedies, endeavour to depart from the firm ground of experience." It is to this second principle that the qualifying words "in the present, etc.," refer.

Their first principle is, in the opinion of the Commissioners, universal in its application.

As to the second, others may prefer theory to experience: their inquiry shows them that the latter is the true guide. Hence in the present conditions of the country they propose the extension of what has been found by experience to be morally and socially advantageous to the community. I need hardly point out that if the first principle be admitted, it must be held to govern all future proposals whether based on theory or suggested by experience. To admit it is to admit the whole case of the Commissioners. And this essential principle was *not* treated by them as applicable only to "the present condition of the country."

STATEMENT III.

"Just as on a battlefield a surgeon may amputate a limb which he would have tried to save if he had had the appliances and the leisure of a well-appointed hospital, so in the present condition of the country the Poor Law reformers chose a cruel remedy, because, on the whole, its kindness was greater than its cruelty, and nothing kinder was practicable."

The reformers were in no such conditions of forced labour and hasty decision. They had before them a great mass of suggestions and proposals. Eden's book was in their hands "the great storehouse of information on the subject," besides a very useful literature that had sprung up since, and in which all kinds of measures and half-measures were suggested. Malthus had started discussions in which the problem of the relief of the poor was met at every turn. Copleston, Courtenay, and others used and criticised Malthus. Select Committees had reported on the relief of the able-bodied, and between 1825 and 1831 five bills were brought in, which dealt with this difficult part of the problem of public relief. A very useful preliminary inquiry into the administration of poor relief had been made by a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1817; other Committees reported in 1819 and 1821. In 1817, and in 1830-31, before the Poor Law Commissioners were appointed, investigations were made by Select Committees of the House of Lords. Almost everything that has been proposed of late years had been canvassed by competent persons — home colonisation, employment on farms, national insurance, supplementation of Friendly Societies by the rates, the grant of relief on favourable terms to members of Friendly Societies, a central board of supervision, etc. etc. The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1817 states the allowance question and much else admirably, acknowledges the urgency of the problem, and admits that "the remedial

efforts of the most able and enlightened men have practically failed." All the many issues of the problem had been partially threshed out before the Commissioners came on the scene. They took it up and dealt with it without half-measures, in a manner which rich and poor alike could understand. They were all of them, I believe, either experts in practical administration or well qualified as students of the subject. Though it was not so large as they desired, they had a considerable staff of assistant commissioners, who published reports, the completeness of which can hardly be gauged without consulting the lengthy appendix which contains them, and which touch on all kinds of collateral subjects—wages, rents, charities, etc. The replies to the questions circulated by the Commissioners throughout the country constitute a social census of a kind never, I believe, undertaken before or since. "The most valuable part of our evidence," the Commissioners call it; though they prudently estimated that "one-half of the returns were of no value." A volume of foreign communications contains minute information in regard to the administration of relief on the Continent and in America. Another volume of home communications deals with dispensaries, and with emigration and colonisation, and contains, besides much else, independent statements regarding the state of administration in certain parishes and counties in England. The Commissioners built upon the work of their predecessors. Their measures were not novel, but they were definite and appropriate. They were measures, and not half-measures. They adopted the old workhouse system, but on new conditions. They reverted to "tests and rules" with inquiry, instead of relying, as the legislators just before them had done, on inquiry solely. The refusal of relief to able-bodied men, which others had suggested, they approved, but again under definite conditions consistent with their main principle. Alike therefore in investigating the subject, and in suggesting remedies, they endeavoured to carry out their immense task with thoroughness. Nothing could be more unlike the hasty treatment of the wounded on a field of battle than their

deliberate and thoughtful analysis of the evil and their suggested remedies. There is no sign of panic in the legislation they proposed, or of extremity of haste in their counsels.

In all efforts to gain or retain self-dependence there may seem to be some hardship, and if the discipline of returning to healthy social conditions is hard, even some "cruelty," if a rather exaggerated expression is permissible. But, except in this sense, there is no reason to believe that the reformers chose a cruel remedy, or a remedy that they thought cruel, or that they chose the remedy as a *pis aller*, because nothing better was practicable. They submitted the plans which they thought actually the best. That the change would entail an effort, and even some hardship, on the part of the people was obvious; and this was not overlooked at the time. In 1837, within three years of the passing of the Act, a Select Committee of the House of Commons inquired into particular instances of alleged severity or abuse, which had been mentioned in Parliament. In one instance there had been, it was judged, improper action on the part of officials. In others the charges came to naught. The difficulty of the able-bodied in meeting the change in the administration of poor relief was admitted. The Committee wrote:—

These statements (evidence of the great benefits produced by the Poor Law Amendment Act) have been met by the production of particular instances in which the rules of the Commissioners are said to have operated with severity, principally upon labourers with numerous families of children too young for work. It is impossible that the withdrawal of parish allowances in such cases should not have been attended with privations unless met by a rise of wages, by more constant work, or greater employment for the family. The evidence received by your Committee leads them to believe that these results have followed the alteration of the law—wages have risen, and the amount of employment has confessedly, and by the admission of adverse witnesses, increased. But your Committee cannot pretend to say that, in any state of things, or in any condition of society, the possession of a numerous family

dependent on the efforts of their parents for support will not be felt as a serious incumbrance. Much must always depend upon the disposition and means of the employers of labour, much upon the character and exertions of the labourers, and in these important respects the law appears to your Committee to have placed both parties reciprocally upon a better footing. Bad habits of long standing are, however, not easily eradicated. The inclination to make the parish fund contribute to the payment of wages may for a time prevail with the employers of labour, and the labourer's disposition to rely on so easy a resource may not at once be changed for greater activity and exertion, but it is to be remarked that the new law has a direct tendency to produce a better state of things, the employers of labour having an immediate pecuniary interest in avoiding the expense of maintaining whole families in the Workhouse, and at the same time the labourers are necessarily stimulated to increased efforts, and to greater regularity of conduct, in order to avoid the necessity of going there. While, therefore, it is most desirable to employ all practical means for the alleviation of particular instances of pressure, great care should be taken not to introduce in any shape the old system of allowances, which had a decided tendency to lower wages, and to deprive the labourer of his independent character. The aged poor in Droxford, and in all the unions which have come before your Committee, do not appear to be materially affected by any rules which have been issued for the regulation of their relief. In no instance have they been compelled to reside in the Workhouse, and in those cases in which they have, it is owing to the circumstance of their having no home or friends with whom they could conveniently lodge, or from their own choice. The same parties, before the change of law, would have been found in the parish poorhouse. They generally receive their pay at the place where they live, and the amount seems, upon the whole, to have been increased rather than diminished.

"Cruelty" then, if there was cruelty at all, was due to the change as it affected the able-bodied poor and their families, and no other class. And this change I have shown to be just, and I believe all disputants at the present day allow it to have been necessary and salutary. Unless the evidence is sufficient to justify so extreme a charge, is

it not a pity that words like "cruelty" should be imported into a discussion in which, more than in any other, careful and discriminating language is desirable?

STATEMENT IV.

"The Poor Law Commissioners hoped, as I do, that the condition of the working classes would improve, till public relief is no longer needed, and all the services rendered by them to the State take higher forms. They did not attempt to prove that public relief must always, and from the nature of the case, involve a special disgrace, independently of the circumstances under which it was given. But the notion that it does, has been fostered by legislators, by economists, and others, and by the action of the stern school of Poor Law reformers. It has been fostered also by many officials of the Charity Organisation Societies, and though I am informed that it is not deliberately adopted by the council of the Central London Society, it appears to be practically inculcated by their action and by the general tone of their publications."

"The other course is to turn a deaf ear to the complaints" (of the working classes), "and to speak, as the editor of the *Charity Organisation Review* (April 1892, p. 139) does, as to their having a wholesome feeling of inferiority in accepting public relief."

If the Commissioners hoped that the condition of the working classes would improve till public relief was no longer needed, they certainly did not say so. They are very guarded in their expressions. They describe their hopes thus:—

"It will be observed that the measures which we have suggested are intended to produce rather negative than positive effects; rather to remove the debasing influences to which a large portion of the labouring population is now subject, than to afford new means of prosperity and virtue. We are perfectly aware, that for the general diffusion of right principles and habits we are to look, not so much

to any economic arrangements and regulations as to the influence of a moral and religious education, and important evidence on the subject will be found throughout the Appendix. But one great advantage of any measure which shall remove or diminish the evils of the present system is, that it will in the same degree remove the obstacles which now impede the progress of instruction, and interrupt its results; and will afford a free scope to the operation of every instrument which may be employed for elevating the intellectual and moral condition of the poorer classes."

It is true that the Commissioners did not attempt to prove that public relief must *always, and from the nature of the case*, involve a special disgrace. But neither has the notion been fostered by legislators, nor by the stern school of Poor Law reformers, nor by the officials of the Charity Organisation Society. Of economists I will not presume to speak. They may be left to devour one another. If, however, the notion had been fostered by legislators we should find the traces of it in legislation; and it might, I suppose, be said to be fostered by legislation, for instance, by the fact that those who receive poor relief are deprived of the franchise. This restriction, so far as medical relief pure and simple is concerned, is now removed, rightly or wrongly. But the general rule remains, and in 1834 it seems to have been accepted as a matter of course. What is the ground for it? This surely, that relief should not be given or taken in such a way as to act as a political bribe. And that the provision is wise I think American experience has shown. On the other hand, that legislation has not, even in this matter, fostered the idea that public relief must "always, and from the nature of the case," involve a special disgrace is evident. In the Poor Law Amendment Act itself is a provision that "all relief given to or on account of the wife, or to or on account of any child or children under the age of sixteen, not being blind or deaf and dumb, shall be considered as given to the husband of such wife, or to the father of such child or children as the case may be." It follows that, when the wife or child is blind or deaf and dumb, their relief is con-

sidered as *not* given to the husband or father responsible for their maintenance, and accordingly the husband or father retains his franchise. To take another point. By the same Act any justice of the peace is empowered to give an order for medical relief (only) to any parishioner, as well as out-parishioner, where any case of sudden and dangerous illness may require it. Also the overseers in cases of sudden and urgent necessity have to give relief under penalties. And further, there is the clause already referred to, by which, "it is lawful for any two of her Majesty's justices of the peace usually acting for the district, at their just and proper discretion, to direct, by order under their hand and seal, that relief shall be given to any adult person, who shall from old age or infirmity of body be wholly unable to work, without requiring that such person shall reside in any workhouse." These powers could hardly have been placed in the hands of justices, who were required to act as a check on the Guardians, nor would these penalties have been imposed upon overseers, if the relief which they were authorised to give was considered by the legislature "always and in the nature of the case to involve a special disgrace." Further, in regard to the aged, the Prohibitory Order and the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order say nothing, and I have shown both above and in a paper on Old-Age Pensions read by me at Brecon in May 1892 that the policy of the Poor Law Commission was to deal very gently with the aged, and not by any means to treat them as participators in a "special disgrace." More recent legislation, as it affects the afflicted and members of Friendly Societies, fully confirms the view that the statement, so far as it concerns legislators, is incorrect. Let us now come to the "stern school of Poor Law reformers."

First we take one of the older school, Sir George Nicholls. He wrote, in his *Letters of an Overseer* (1822), as follows:—

I will now proceed to make some observations on Poor Houses, or Work Houses, or Buildings for the reception and residence of our indigent Poor. The laws humanely provide that no person shall be permitted to perish through absolute

t. If in any town or parish there be a number of persons, from age, infirmity, or indigence have become unable to ›ort or take care of themselves, it may be desirable to ·ide a suitable residence in which they shall be taken care ·thus far the law enjoins (see the several Acts regulating construction and government of workhouses from the 9 . I., Ch. 7, down to the 59 Geo. III., Ch. 12). In such a ptacle, these poor persons ought to have what is really :ssary for their support, but nothing superfluous—it is likely they would there too occupy the attention of the surround- population, and the inmate of a Poor House would excite or reproach as the case might be; but there ought to be ing in his situation at all calculated to create any desire ng that surrounding population for becoming resident ein—the Poor House ought to be so framed and conducted, ıat the labouring part of the community might not behold etter furnished, better provided, more comfortable than r own Houses; they should not, in winter, see all its chimneys :rfully smoking, when their own hearths were cold through want of means to provide needful firing; nor all comforts, :ast in their estimation, pervading the abode of the Pauper, n their own habitations presented scenes of want and chedness! On the contrary, it is most desirable that they ıld consider the poor objects there sheltered rather as :ons to be avoided, than as examples to be followed, or as essors of a good to be coveted.

f a Poor House, then, or a receptacle for the aged, infirm, needy be necessary—and I fear it would be in vain now xpect that our lower orders generally will have been so ident as to lay by during the period of their youth and ıgth against the season of age, want, or sickness, however :able it might be for them to do so—if such a house be ided, it ought to comprise only what is *really necessary* ›ersons in their situation, coupled with every possible pro- ›n for their moral and religious improvement: but the rules :rved in it should be so strict and repulsive,—the living, clothing, and the comforts provided in it should be of . a description as not to excite a desire for partaking of ı among others.

wish to see the Poor House looked to with dread by our uring classes, and the reproach for being an inmate of it nd downwards from father to son—this was the case at no

very distant period, and earnestly do I wish to see it so again, for without this, where is the needful stimulus to industry and economy? If we undertake to provide comfortably for all who shall become old or infirm, ought we to expect that people will strive hard and encounter privations in their youth for the purpose of laying by a provision for themselves against that period of helplessness arrives?—unhappily, however, the dread of a Poor House has decreased in about the same ratio that pauperism has augmented. I will not stop to inquire how much of this is owing to the humane and well-meant endeavours of many excellent individuals to improve these receptacles, which are now so very generally converted into abodes of comfort, and even of apparent elegance. Something was perhaps needful to be done, towards cleansing, improving, and ventilating them, and establishing order within their walls; but we have too surely gone into the opposite extreme: and in this, as in some other instances, our humanity has led us beyond the bounds of wisdom.

If we examine the several statutes relative to the poor, from the time of Elizabeth downwards, a watchful care for their support will always be found coupled with a wholesome severity of enactment,—at the same time that "the impotent, the lame, old, and blind," are to be relieved, "the idle, the improvident, and the dissolute" are subject to prompt and summary punishment, and compelled to labour for their subsistence. Let magistrates and overseers then enforce these enactments, if they adhere to the injunctions of these statutes by taking all proper care of the aged and infirm, let them also adhere to the equally needful provisions of the same statutes, by awarding punishment where it shall be merited, and by compelling every one who is capable of work to labour to the extent of his or her ability: whether such person be at large, or within the precincts of a Poor House,—let no one eat the bread of idleness, or be permitted to fatten on the exertions of others.

Here we have "the reproach" referred to. But why? Because unless that reproach be felt, "which was the case at no very distant period," the needful stimulus to industry and economy is lost; and even though we make no deduction whatever for the strength of conviction with which

this sentiment is expressed, yet does it amount to a statement that "always, and from the nature of the case," relief "involves a special disgrace"? By no means. It might be right that the people should think it a reproach to have to receive poor relief, while nevertheless they held the opinion, that in cases in which under the Poor Acts necessary relief was required for the aged, there was no special disgrace in receiving it. That this was the Commissioners' view is shown by the action of the Poor Law Commission, upon which Sir George Nicholls served.

I now pass to the other end of the period with which we have to do—our own times. I am fairly well acquainted with the papers read and the speeches made by those who have taken part in Poor Law conferences in the last twenty years; and I am acquainted with some of the men who have taken a foremost place in promoting Poor Law reform at those conferences. I think I may select Mr. Pell, the late Mr. Bland-Garland, and Mr. Bury, as representatives of "the stern school" of a later date. They have been constant attendants at the conferences, and may be thought to have opened their minds freely to an audience consisting of Poor Law Guardians. These are, I believe, their strongest utterances:—

Mr. Pell (1882) says: "The object of my remarks will be to express my undying hostility to that mischievous principle of the Poor Law which permits us to relieve ourselves of our obligations to our poorer neighbours." He refers, I understand, to outdoor relief. Of the institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board for the afflicted, he speaks in terms of approval, and he advocates better infirmary management. Clearly he is not of opinion that "always and from the nature of the case" Poor Law relief involves a special disgrace.

Mr. Bland-Garland (1882) said that he would like to write in letters of gold in every Board room the words of Sir George Nicholls on the Poor Law Amendment Act, namely:—

"The Act is avowedly based on the principle that no one should be suffered to perish through want of what is

necessary for sustaining life, but at the same time, that, if he be supported at the expense of the public, he must be content to receive such support on the terms deemed most consistent with the public welfare." And he argues, that "so long as the people can look forward to obtaining permanent outdoor relief, they will be indifferent to making provision for their old age, and their children will neglect to assist them."

Mr. Bury (1876) says that "a Poor Law can only be justified as a necessary evil, given like the Divorce Laws of Moses, because of the hardness of men's hearts, and necessary because men in every rank of life fail to recognise their responsibilities." "A Poor Law is at best only a political device, and can have no humanising influence on those who administer it, while to those who look to it for help, it is a direct encouragement to idleness."

Unless it can be argued that relief from a "necessary" Poor Law involves always a special disgrace, there is nothing in the statements of these speakers to justify the terms of the text. These men care primarily for the obligations which, as they believe, hold society together in health and goodwill. They would remove "without hardship," so far as it can be removed, what has been shown to weaken moral obligations. The rest may remain. It is not to be tested by this or that measure of disgrace, but by the rule of social necessity.

The last words of the sweeping statement that we have before us refers to many officials of the Charity Organisation Society. It is also said that the view that Poor Law relief "always and from the nature of the case involves a special disgrace," "appears to be practically inculcated by the action of the council of the Charity Organisation Society, and by the general tone of their publications."

On this point I cannot do better than state simply what I understand the attitude of the society to be. "It is the duty of District Committees," the Manual of the society states, "to endeavour to effect a division of work between the Poor Law and charity. They accordingly leave to the Poor Law such cases of destitution as cannot, in their

opinion, be effectually assisted by charitable help, but cases in which there is prospect of some permanent good being done they endeavour to help from charitable sources. . . . The Committees cannot undertake to find from their own funds the pensions which deserving chronic cases of aged people require—that is, cases in which there is evidence of good character, thrift, and reasonable efforts to provide for the future. But they endeavour to procure such pensions from relations, friends, former employers, charities, and charitable persons." And I would add, lest there be any misunderstanding as to the "division of work," that "the supplementation of Poor Law relief is strongly discouraged, though such relief may be given with the object of taking a case off the rates." At first, as may be seen from the reports made by General Lynedoch Gardiner and Miss Octavia Hill to the Local Government Board in 1873-74, the plan was adopted in Marylebone of supplementing the rates in the case of aged persons, but this practice is in London almost entirely abandoned by the society now. There is nothing said then of "special disgrace" and the rest. The line taken is that of the Commissioners. Yet, again I would point out—this is not inconsistent with the view that receipt of relief from the rates does and should, as a rule, carry with it "a wholesome sense of inferiority," to use not our phrase but Mr. Rae's.[1]

There is, indeed, a very general feeling of shame in receiving help from public relief funds. The evidence of it may be gleaned everywhere. It is not a needless result of evil old traditions. It occurs where there have been no such traditions. Take, as an illustration, this note from Galt's *Annals of a Scotch Parish*:—

She came to our clachan no doubt from an honest pride to hide her poverty; for when her daughter Effie was ill with the measles—the poor lassie was very ill—nobody thought she would come through, and when she did get a turn, she was for many a day a heavy handful;—our session being rich, and nobody on it but cripple Tommy Daidles, that was at that

[1] *Economic Journal*, No. 5, vol. ii., March 1892, p. 184.

time known through all the country side for begging on a horse, I thought it was my duty to call upon Mrs. Malcolm in a sympathising way, and offer her some assistance, but she refused it. "No, sir," said she, "I canna take help from the poor's box, although it is very true that I am in great need; for it might hereafter be cast up to my bairns, whom it may please God to restore to better circumstances when I am no to see't; but I would fain borrow five pounds, and if, sir, you will write to Mr. Maitland, that is now Lord Provost of Glasgow, and tell him Marion Shaw would be obliged to him for the lend of that soom, I think he will not fail to send it."

And a quaintly expressed commentary on this may be found in the Report furnished by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1818. They refer to the lower classes of the people there, "so universally and so long distinguished by a proud and virtuous aversion for dependence on parish charity, while they could earn by their own labour a subsistence for themselves." They greatly fear the introduction of "Assessments," lest "relief from the poor's funds being beheld as a right, the shame of applying for it will be effaced. The necessity for personal industrious exertion will be felt as superseded," etc. etc. "In parishes not assessed the reluctance of the poor to apply for charity from the parochial funds is still but little, if at all diminished, while from every part of the country, numerous instances are given of a most amiable and scrupulous delicacy in avoiding application for parish relief, in spite of extreme distress and want, and of even declining to receive it where pressed by the session for acceptance."

No doubt careless administration weakens this feeling. In 1837 it was said, "the best sort of men we have now are fifty or sixty years old, that just began before the old system. They were much superior in their work, because they had no parish to fly to. They used to feel indignant at it, they would not go to the parish." Since 1837 we have done something to revert to this, as I think, better feeling, chiefly through good administration on the lines

of the Poor Law Commissioners. But the "evil old traditions" still linger, by no means in the belief that the receipt of Poor Law relief is a disgrace, but in the ready willingness to receive outdoor relief. As the late Mr. Doyle said in 1873: "The poor have a very great objection to going into the Workhouse, but not the slightest objection, as a general rule, I am sorry to say, to receiving relief in a more acceptable form." And again in the case of medical relief. Writing of the Poor Law Dispensaries, a Special Committee of the House of Lords said last year that some thought that "the obligation to get an order from the relieving officer carried with it a stigma which would keep the dispensaries free from any great amount of abuse." But a well-informed witness was of opinion that the objection to receiving this kind of assistance from the rates was disappearing, and the evidence supported his view. But if in the last twenty years there has been in many parts of the country a growth of "honest pride" which would suffer a feeling of inferiority if it received poor relief, why should we depreciate it? What is the evidence that this increase of self-respect and dislike of dependence, which, as we have seen, lies deep in our nature, is injurious either to the community or the individual?

The Commissioners, as it appears to me, formed their judgment on grounds much more solid than an analysis of relative degrees of disgrace in asking for relief. They troubled themselves very little, if at all about it. They felt, I suppose, "That the art and practic part of life Must be the mistress to this theoric."

Statement V.

The worker, "whose health and strength break down even before the age of sixty-five, would have to show evidence that he had made reasonable attempts to provide for the future. And, after due notice, he would be specially called on to prove that he had saved in the early years of life when his wages were already high and

his expenses not yet heavy. He would need to give an outline of his life's history in a little, but not much, more detail than would be required to establish his identity; he would have to give an account of his present resources and needs; but that is all. No minute scrutiny of his past conduct is needed; but the facts which he gave in establishing his identity would afford the means of proving against him any grave crime or persistent evil living of which he had been guilty."[1] . . . "They [the working classes] believe that, when given under these conditions [subscription to a Friendly Society of a sure standing in some reasonable relation to wages, or provision made in some other way for the future], out relief would directly raise and not lower the tone and vigour of the working classes, and would indirectly contribute towards many important social ends."[2]

"It is quite true that the really hard cases under the present system are not very numerous; but such as they are they appeal strongly to the imagination of those who think that accumulated misfortune may strike down themselves and those dear to them. . . . To treat such cases justly and generously with public funds would not require a very great outlay, and it would remove a prolific source of just anger."[3]

"I assume that the extension of the scope of public relief [outdoor] would be cautious, tentative, and slow; and that able-bodied men would not receive outdoor relief under ordinary circumstances; though the plan of giving temporary outdoor relief to their families, on condition that they themselves came into the Workhouse, might be extended."[4]

Here two modes of selection are contrasted. The plan now in force is inquiry *plus*, if need be, the offer of the House. That suggested is inquiry solely (though later on it is said that "simple cases of undeserving people are to be passed on to the Workhouse") and a thrift test. This is an apparently positive test, and to many minds it is

[1] *Economic Journal*, vol. iii. p. 188.
[2] p. 372. [3] pp. 374, 375. [4] p. 189.

naturally, therefore, attractive. Let us compare the two. The offer of the House, failing inquiry or supported by inquiry, is an absolute material test: it is an offer of sufficient relief under humane but irksome conditions.[1] The thrift test is, in fact, no test at all. The standard of the obligation to give relief on the part of the administrators, and of the claim to receive relief on the part of the applicants, will vary everywhere; indeed, must everywhere vary. What, for instance, is a reasonable amount of thrift? The question will be answered in many ways. Some will decide: "Considering the lowness of his wage, it is enough that the applicant has been able to get along so far: let him have outdoor relief." Some will say: "Was it not enough that he spent his money on a growing family"? or "The man, it is clear, did not hold with Friendly Societies"; and so on. Thus the number of conditions in accordance with which the standard of obligation to give relief will rise in one union and fall in another becomes indefinite. And if all the facts are not accurately known, minutely considered, and impartially decided upon, injustice is done. Thus the thrift test is after all no test, but a source of injustice; and thrift after all is found to be only one point out of many in the inquiry. A true test throws the decision as to acceptance or refusal on the applicant. This untrue test divides the responsibility between a claimant who has to profess that he has done something meritorious to qualify himself for relief and a Board who have to decide whether the claim comes up to, or falls below, their standard of merit. Instead of a test, then, we have an unreal semblance of

[1] With regard to the principle of giving poor relief under conditions more ineligible than those under which the labouring classes have to live, it should be noticed, perhaps, that, as these conditions improve, the relative standard of relief in the Workhouse may probably be raised without detriment. This is suggested by the experience of the last twenty years, and also by the remark of so good an observer as Bishop Copleston, who, writing in 1819, from the *moral elasticity* which he noticed among the poor, in spite of the temptations of ill-administered Poor Law Relief, drew the conclusion that "the stronger the spirit of independent industry is found to be, the more safely may liberality be exercised in the rate of subsistence to the poor. Precisely in proportion to their slowness in resorting to it, may the scale of bounty and indulgence be raised."

judicial procedure, and, as a result, an uncertain and divided responsibility injurious alike to giver and receiver.

But first, what were the views of the Poor Law Commissioners? They restored the method of relief in a well-managed workhouse which had been found successful in the past, and which those best conversant with the subject were more and more inclined to approve; and they showed the limits of the system of investigation. The Select Committees that preceded them laid great stress upon the latter. They insisted that Select Vestries should, in accordance with 59 Geo. III., c. 12, inquire into and determine upon the proper objects of relief, and the nature and amount of the relief to be given, and in each case take into consideration the character and conduct of the poor person to be relieved, and be at liberty to distinguish in the relief granted between the deserving and the idle, extravagant, and profligate poor. The attempt to do this was one of the causes of failure. The Commissioners more wisely said: "Under the present system it is found that whenever relief is permitted to remain eligible to any except those who are absolutely destitute, the cumbrous and expensive barriers of investigations and appeals erected to protect the rates seem only as partial impediments, and every day offer a more feeble resistance to the strong interests set against them. . . . In the absence of fixed rules and tests that can be depended upon, the officers in large towns have often no alternative between indiscriminately granting or indiscriminately refusing relief. . . . If merit is to be the condition on which relief is given; if such a duty as that of rejecting the claims of the undeserving is to be performed, we see no possibility of finding an adequate number of officers, whose character and decisions would obtain sufficient popular confidence to remove the impression of the possible rejection of some deserving cases; we believe, indeed, that a closer investigation of the claims of the able-bodied paupers, and a more extensive rejection of the claims of the undeserving, would, for a considerable time, be accompanied by an increase of the popular opinion to which we have alluded, and consequently

by an increase of the disposition to give to mendicants." The "popular opinion" alluded to is — that a certain, though it may be a very small, proportion of "apparently deserving" cases are rejected—the popular opinion, in fact, that there are more and not "fewer" hard cases.

"Irresistible temptations to fraud," according to the Commissioners, "were afforded—

"1. By the want of adequate means, or of diligence and ability, even where the means exist, to ascertain the truth of the statements on which claims to relief are founded.

"2. By the absence of the check of shame, owing to the want of a broad line of distinction between the class of independent labourers and the class of paupers, and the degradation of the former by confounding them with the latter.

"3. By the personal situation, connections, interests, and want of appropriate knowledge on the part of the rate distributors, which render the exercise of discretion in the administration of all relief, and especially of outdoor relief, obnoxious to the influence of intimidation, of local partialities, and of local fears, and to corrupt profusion, for the sake of popularity or of pecuniary gain."

Clearly their objections to reliance on inquiry alone are, that it is an insufficient and uncertain instrument for the selection of applicants, that it is no sufficient safeguard against favouritism, and that, arbitrary in its results, it adds force to the common opinion that hard cases are numerous. Do these objections hold good now? I think that the evidence shows that they do. No one of any experience, I believe, who has seen the investigation usually made by Boards of Guardians can avoid the conclusion that it is meagre and insufficient. To this the reply is: Put working men on the Boards and it will improve. But, good as it is that all classes should take their part in Poor Law work, there is no reason to believe that the whole system of investigation will be improved by it to such an extent that in future inquiry by itself will be a sufficient method of discrimination. But, it is suggested, working men will make inquiries themselves, and so obtain

more trustworthy information at a less cost. If they undertake this task, the members of the Board, who belong to other classes, must be allowed to do so as well, and where each has a claimant, for whose suitability he can vouch, who shall decide? Each will have his own clients. Each will be in a still stronger position than at present to speak for them. In Poor Law administration inquiry is in fact effective only when outdoor relief is reduced, when a non-outdoor-relief policy has become the recognised system of the Union. But then the thrift test is not wanted, for the people have been brought to depend on themselves. Or if, as in one or two Unions, there remains for a time a kind of closely regulated outdoor relief, for the receipt of which good character and thrift are necessary conditions, these cases steadily decrease, and the same result is attained. But, it is said, double your Relieving Officers and your investigation will be adequate. This might be so, if it were proved that investigation, and investigation only, was the true method. But this is not proved. And even if it were, it is far from easy to obtain men of sufficient insight for the purposes of inquiry, and to supervise them thoroughly; and with the consent of the community to increase largely the cost of administration. But—another argument—investigation has been found to work in the case of charities, why should it not with the Poor Law? To which it may be replied that much charity is ill-bestowed for lack of proper investigation, so that on that score the argument is inconclusive; and that, apart from other reasons, the claim upon a Poor Law system and upon charity is radically different. One is based on a conditional right, the other is, on the side both of giver and receiver, voluntary. And to each, therefore, different methods are applicable. But of this later on.

The next argument—that as to favouritism—remains intact. Classes are not so unlike that the introduction into the administration of one—the working class—will stop the tendency to favouritism. Individuals will fight against it; and as they do, administration will improve; and it is likely that, as administration improves, the use of

"fixed rules and tests" with inquiry will be found as serviceable to us as it was to our predecessors.

Lastly, as to hard cases. On the scheme proposed hard cases will be more numerous, and will seem more numerous. As at present in the normal administration of outdoor relief, so when a thrift test be applied, if the applicant does not receive what his neighbour receives or what he thinks he deserves, to his friends and to himself he will seem a "hard case." Next, experience shows that hard cases are fewest in Unions where people are thrown on their own resources to meet all the ordinary contingencies of life. In many outdoor relief Unions dissatisfaction with the administration of the Poor Law seems chronic—naturally, since outdoor relief is the mother of hard cases. Again, under the proposed conditions, as at present, outdoor allowances will be only one source of maintenance. Moneys received from other sources are rendered more uncertain by such allowances: and the money from the Friendly Society is *ex hypothesi* insufficient, or it would not have to be supplemented by outdoor relief. We have thus the old difficulties of *partial* dependence. And there can be no sufficient supervision over a large number of outdoor relief cases. But the number will not be large, it may be retorted. We can hardly prophesy that; if the inquiry is insufficient, the number is likely to be very large. But, to avoid the difficulties of partial dependence, it may be decided to make up by outdoor relief all the difference between the total payment from the club and what is considered an adequate allowance. Then, since, when outdoor relief is given, the relations are least inclined to help, the bonus on thrift would act as a discount on help from the family: and the disinclination to help is likely to be greater than at present, since the State will have so clearly undertaken the duty of partial maintenance.

Another argument is used. It is said that outdoor relief may be employed as a means of raising the tone and vigour of the working classes. Again, what is the evidence? We know that the withdrawal of relief outside the House to the able-bodied, except on the conditions

laid down in the Orders, has rendered them independent. The Friendly Societies have greatly developed in consequence, and their members comparatively seldom apply for relief. But in cases of old age especially Boards of Guardians have been in the habit of taking Friendly Societies' allowances at half their actual amount, thus adopting the principle of giving to "a man of good character rather more than the necessaries of life." So far as this practice has extended, it appears to have done nothing to promote entire self-support in old age, whereas in certain country Unions where a non-outdoor-relief policy has been adopted and supplementation avoided, old-age pauperism hardly exists, and the whole population in one way and another provides for itself. Another instance. Which have flourished best, the patronised Friendly Societies or those in which the whole weight of provision and management has fallen on the members themselves? Surely the latter. And again, think of the petty contrivances of parochial machinery, and the premiums of coal clubs and Dorcas Societies, which keep a mass of patronised poor in a state of flaccid dependence on the "upper classes." In this regard one is reminded of those old societies for the distribution of rewards to the industrious poor, of which a clergyman gave the following evidence in 1837:—

When first I came to this parish I instituted rewards for virtuous conduct amongst my parishioners; but I soon found that I did more mischief than good by the proceeding, and I was compelled to abandon it. I found that my parishioners, from their situation, knew more of the objects that I selected for reward than I possibly could. They saw actions of which I could obtain no knowledge. With all my desire to do justice, there were actions which I forgot to take into account, and of those which I did take into account they probably often made a more correct estimate than I could; under these circumstances I probably was led to decide unjustly, and excited more ill-feeling by my decisions than emulation by my rewards.

And what instances can be quoted on the other side of permanent improvement in thrift or saving by the gift of State bounties? None, I think. Yet the bounty may be advocated as a temporary measure. The people do not yet provide for old age, it may be said: by degrees the Friendly Societies will do this; but meanwhile we need the bounty. But, as I have shown, the bounty system is a bad bridge. Outdoor relief, as now administered, is serving as a bridge—a bad bridge, too, no doubt. But with so imperfect a bridge we are the more likely to be discontented with anything short of independence. The bounty bridge may become a permanent institution and bar the way to independence. Another evil: the bounty may have just the opposite effect to that intended. It may act as an inducement to pauperism quite as much as to thrift. On this point Mr. A. Doyle's evidence before the Friendly Society Commission may again be quoted. He says: "I should most strongly object to [the member of a certificated club being entitled under similar circumstances to a greater amount of outdoor relief than a man who was not a member of such a club] for . . . when you once give a right to a man who has deposited to receive relief, he goes to the Guardians and says, virtually, 'I have deposited so much money with you. I have come to draw it, and you have promised to me a certain amount in addition to it, that is simply the interest of my money, and I come not to apply for relief but to get back the money which I have entrusted to you to keep for me with a certain amount of interest.' By that system you altogether destroy the discredit which may attach to pauperism, and you hold out a direct inducement to people to join clubs, not for the sake of the advantage of the club or from any provident motive, but simply that they may become paupers on more favourable terms."

I cannot help thinking that, if the working classes believe that such statements as I have been criticising are correct, they have been misled, and their common sense will soon teach them that the qualified outdoor relief which is proposed is extremely harmful to their best interests.

But to return to the "hard cases." The Commissioners say: "The bane of all pauper legislation has been the legislation for hard cases. Every exception, every violation of the general rule to meet a real case of unusual hardship, lets in a whole class of fraudulent cases by which that rule must in time be destroyed. Where cases of real hardship occur the remedy must be applied by individual charity, a virtue for which no system of compulsory relief can be or ought to be a substitute."

We are now asked to legislate to meet hard cases, and to merge charitable and Poor Law relief. Most of the progress of the last twenty years has been made by drawing clearly and sharply the line between Poor Law and charity, and from the Poor Law side treating applicants by fixed rules and tests and as a class, while charity has taken up any cases of hardship—and they were very few indeed, so few that the changes of administration at Whitechapel and St. George's-in-the-East, as at Brixworth and Bradfield were introduced without placing reliance on any form of organised charitable relief. Under any system hard cases will arise, and, as the Commissioners have pointed out, and experience has shown, under no system will there seem to be so many hard cases as on the system of discrimination and decision based on the character and relative moral worth of applicants. To treat such cases generously from the public funds would probably be the height of injustice to people at large, and would probably open the door to that lavish outdoor relief, which we are told that we must not suggest as the natural outcome of this "cautious, tentative, and slow" procedure.

Further, to the able-bodied outdoor relief is to be given, though "not under ordinary circumstances." The Commissioners, as we have seen, were bold enough to propose the refusal of relief to able-bodied men, except in the House. From this previous Committees shrunk. In 1824 the Select Committee of the House of Commons said, "It has been thrown out that the practice of giving relief to able-bodied labourers on account of their impotent children might be positively forbidden by legislative enactment.

Your Committee are not prepared to go this length; but they venture to suggest that where wages have been reduced with a view to supply the deficiency from the parish rate, relief might be refused to any person actually in the employment of an individual." This was a half measure that the Commissioners set aside, and they have been justified by events. As we know, able-bodied men in receipt of relief are now few. The difficulty of dealing with able-bodied women—a constant cause of protracted pauperism—has in most Unions still to be grappled with.[1] But if we now slide cautiously into a system of giving outdoor relief to the able-bodied, the plan of giving temporary relief on condition that the head of the family comes into the House will be scornfully set aside. Who will submit the "hard case" to such a humiliation? The plan is not adopted in any Union now. The Whitechapel order allows that Union to act upon it. But, in fact, they have not done so, but act practically in accordance with the Prohibitory Order. At both St. George's-in-the-East and Whitechapel, in times of unusual distress, the plan has been adopted to a very limited extent of offering the House to the head of a family, on the understanding that his family are supported by charity. But this, infrequent as it is, is a different method. There is, therefore, no reason to believe that under the proposed altered conditions the plan suggested would meet with general acceptance. And if it does not, we revert to the old position of relief to the able-bodied pure and simple, for neither in this passage nor elsewhere is stress laid on the unpleasant conditions of administration—the safeguards that repel, instead of the allowances that attract, not merely naughty undeserving people, but respectable deserving people who have

[1] Applicable to the cases of women there are various exceptions in the Poor Law orders. And in these and in other instances the theory has grown up that destitution is the claim for relief, but that, if that claim be satisfied, the form of relief should be settled according to character and circumstances. We have thus a character test, dependent on inquiry, applied to many applications for outdoor relief, with the result that, especially in the case of women, outdoor pauperism is very large. Thus here again the character test is applied and fails.

no objection to living on their neighbours if a kind State will make it possible to them to do so without "reproach."

STATEMENT VI.

"They [the working classes] urge that so long as the country holds any of the money which he [the applicant] has contributed as an insurance for himself and others against need, he ought not to be forced to apply for the "charity" of private persons. . . . And clear proof [that this opinion is wrong] is wanting. Declamations abound; but I have searched in vain the long pages of Blue Books and of the private literature of poor relief for a single straight attempt to face the arguments on the subject which working-class leaders in town and country are putting before their followers. The grim comedy of excluding working-class witnesses from the parliamentary inquiries into poor relief is partly responsible for this failure, as it appears to me to enter into the point of view of the working classes.[1] . . . Unless [the working classes] are themselves first convinced that the system of poor relief is not needlessly harsh, offensive, and patronising, they cannot be expected, when speaking on the subject, to dwell chiefly on the dangers of excessive laxity. And unless they do this, we may perhaps soon see a revival of some of the old abuses of out relief. Mr. Loch, in his recent answer to Mr. Chamberlain, quotes again some familiar facts to show that there is no danger in this. The facts seem to me important as far as they go, but not to go nearly far enough for the purpose to which he applies them."[2]

Here the first point is this:—

1. Poor relief consists of rates contributed as an insurance by the working man and others against need. The long pages of Blue Books and of the private literature of poor relief have been searched in vain "for a single straight attempt to face the arguments on this subject."

[1] p. 374. [2] p. 375.

So far as I know, the argument that a poor rate is an insurance is comparatively new. Other rates are not insurances in any strict use of that word. Why should a poor rate be? It seems almost commonplace to point this out, and an inability to furnish references to arguments forged to meet so obvious a misuse of language might well be pardoned. Yet the poor rate may be thought to have some historic source which would justify its being considered a form of insurance. The Act of Queen Elizabeth, however, is explicit. It requires the churchwardens and overseers to raise weekly or otherwise by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar, and other, and of every occupier of lands, and houses, the "competent sums" required for the well-known purposes of the Act. There is nothing to suggest insurance here: and we know that the Act was passed after a plan had been legalised and failed for providing for the poor out of a voluntary charitable rate. Neither then does the history of the rate suggest "insurance." The Commissioners of 1834 in one place refer to persons "who have a direct interest in the abuses which they defend under the mask of benevolence," who would "no doubt avail themselves of the mischievous ambiguity of the word *poor*, and treat all diminution of the expenditure for the relief of the poor as so much taken from the labouring classes, as if those classes were naturally pensioners on the charity of their supporters, and relief, not wages, were the proper fund for their support." Here we find perhaps an older form of the fallacy. The reduction of relief is here accounted the loss of a "natural pension." But it is a pension drawn from "charity," not from a so-called "insurance" fund. Later, the Royal Commission on Friendly Societies deal with the question in its more modern form. Mr. G. R. Portal, in his evidence (1872), says, that men "look to the club as being a pleasant and satisfactory mode of providing for themselves during their period of health and strength, and are satisfied to look to the Poor Law for their 'relief in old age.' . . . They are not particular enough in looking into the solvency of the club which they join, because they know that the Poor

Law is after all the best benefit club, because everything is taken out, and nothing paid in." This is insurance without an insurance fee, and the argument is evidently stated only to show its absurdity.

The Commission take it for granted that a poor rate cannot be an insurance. They say:—

> If outdoor relief could no longer be reckoned on with comparative certainty, a great stimulus would be given to exertions towards making some provision for old age. It would no longer be argued that "old age was a long time to look forward to," and the Workhouse test would invest providence with new and hitherto unknown attractions. There is no single point in which those best acquainted with the subject more entirely concur than in recommending a more stringent administration of outdoor relief as the best encouragement to providence. . . . The State has long been offering a direct incentive to providence by its legislation in favour of Friendly Societies: by a proper administration of the Poor Law it would offer a direct deterrent from improvidence. Nor need such a deterrent, if gradually introduced and carefully applied, inflict any real hardship even upon the poorest class of labourers. It is a reproach to all concerned that a man with an income which would support him in health and sickness should be able to arrest and divert to his own use funds contributed by others for the really destitute. Yet the weekly savings of agricultural labourers, now put by them into or expended in connection with clubs, which sooner or later must end in insolvency, are often sufficient, if invested in trustworthy and durable societies, to provide them with sick pay, an annuity after the age of sixty-five or seventy, and burial money, and thus to raise them, in ordinary cases, above the risk of pauperism.

To come to more recent dates. Mr. Baldwyn Fleming, in a Report to the Local Government Board, published in their *Annual Report* for 1889-90, after arguing that it would be well if the labourer could be made to feel the actual incidence and variation of the rates, writes: "The very class who escape the payment of poor rates includes most of those (in rural districts at all events) upon whose

behalf it is argued that they are entitled to out relief because they have paid the poor rates." He proceeds:—

The fund for the relief of the poor is a compulsory tax levied from every ratepayer. It is true that every ratepayer, if he become destitute, is entitled to be relieved out of that fund, but the claim to relief is not limited to those who contribute to the fund, and in no degree accrues because of the previous payment into the fund. The right to relief arises from destitution solely, and in no sense from any claim on the ground of rate-payment. A very large proportion of the population are not ratepayers, yet they are all entitled to relief in case of destitution. The tax is not levied for the relief of those who contribute to it, for the greater part of them will never be supported out of the rates. Thus we have the facts that a large proportion of those who are entitled to relief have never contributed to the relief fund, and that the enormous majority of those who have contributed to the fund are not entitled to relief. It is impossible, therefore, to contend with any truth that the payment of rates confers any claim to relief.

This argument is surely direct enough, and it is in a recent Report, which was reprinted for wider circulation.

Of yet more recent date is the following extract from the Report of a Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on "Insurance and Saving" (Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892). The Committee write:—

Poor Law reformers often meet with the argument that the poor ratepayer does put something into the Poor Law Club, and that for this reason he is entitled to draw out for his necessities on his own terms. A moment's reflection will show the fallacy of this argument. The Poor Law rate is not an insurance premium, but it is a compulsory levy for the relief of those who are destitute. It is obvious that if ratepayers pay a *premium* all are equally entitled to relief, and all poor ratepayers at any rate will apply for it, and the rate must be multiplied to an enormous extent. If men are to pay an adequate premium for the benefit which they expect to receive (the only terms on which the benefit can be honourably accepted), they will obtain their requirements much more cheaply from a Friendly Society or other insurance agency than from the State.

We may conclude then, perhaps, that the argument has no basis in fact, that it has taken several forms, that it has been passed over in part because its fallacy was obvious, and that it has been combated at various times in the various forms that it has assumed, and in its latest form also, when repetition of the fallacy seemed to make a reply necessary.

The second point in this Statement is "the grim comedy of excluding working-class witnesses from the parliamentary inquiries into poor relief."

I have looked through the lists of witnesses who have given evidence at many Poor Law Committees in this country, and I think that the charge of unfairness and partiality which this statement suggests is groundless. The witnesses at these inquiries include overseers, who were often tradesmen or manufacturers, beadles, keepers of the pavements, Guardians, and Relieving Officers. All persons, in fact, who had any part in administration and could speak from experience. They include, also, many altogether independent witnesses, whose right to be heard was unquestionable, such, for instance, as Mr. Martin at one period, at others Miss Mary Carpenter, Miss Louisa Twining, and Miss Octavia Hill. The Assistant Commissioners between 1832 and 1834 report evidence taken from all classes, rich and poor alike; and when complaints were made, as in 1837, or in 1866 when there was stated to be extreme distress in "London over the border," the utmost care was taken to hear all sides. In 1889, the year after the publication of the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Poor Relief, Lord Balfour, who represented the Government on that Committee, said:—

I should like to state here a thing which does not appear upon the minutes of our Poor Law Committee. We were most anxious to find if there was any one who could in any real sense be said to be a representative of the working classes who could give us information of the state of feeling of the better-class artisans upon the question of the administration of

the Poor Law. Men of all shades of political opinion were upon the Committee, and that feeling was unanimous. Amongst other means taken to secure the object in view, an approach was made to those who are supposed to be in the House of Commons as the special representatives of large bodies of working men, and who know the feeling of the trades-unions on most questions. They were asked to ascertain whether any one could be named whom the trades-unions, or any large body of working men, could trust to speak for them upon the subject. No one could be named, and it was, much to our disappointment and sorrow, impossible to get such evidence as we desired. We could not ascertain that the questions into which we were appointed to inquire had even been discussed either by the trades-union or anybody representative of the working classes. That man would deserve well of his country who could discover the means of enlisting intelligent artisans and working men in the administration of the Poor Law.

There is thus no "grim comedy." What might have been expected has actually happened. The working classes have been busied with other matters than Poor Law administration, in regard to which they had no special knowledge, and accordingly Committees have not applied for information to them, but to those who they thought would give them the most useful evidence.

The third point is, whether or not we should fear a revival of some of the old abuses of out relief, and because we are afraid of this advocate a modified outdoor relief.

Indirectly, I have already dealt with the latter point. As to the former, the evidence which I quoted in replying to Mr. Chamberlain was the only evidence, which, so far as I know, could be produced, that was based not on speculation but on fact. Every one must realise that a new class has now to be educated in the administration of Poor Law relief. The quotations which I have just made prove that sufficiently. If the franchise for the election of Guardians be lowered as the qualification has been, it is likely that in many places elections will turn solely on political grounds. Already there are signs of this. If that be so, I think that half measures will hardly meet with acquiescence from

either party. And it is at least quite possible that many will support a system the benefits of which will, I believe, be quickly understood by most Friendly Societies' men. If this year's elections on the new qualification be taken as a test, I do not think that there is any reason for alarm. The common sense of the people will "worry through." [1]

Statement VII.

"I propose that they [the Charity Organisation Societies] should continue their work as semi-official bodies; that their authority and resources should be increased by their receiving from the Government a distinct mandate to aid the Guardians; perhaps receiving on their Committees some working men and women representatives of the Local Authority; and having in return the power to nominate some Poor Law Guardians. They would then pass on simple cases of undeserving people to be sent to the ordinary workhouse; and simple cases of deserving and thrifty people with recommendations for outdoor relief, or for indoor relief in special houses where there would be more material comfort and freedom, and much greater moral cleanliness than in an ordinary workhouse. On these recommendations the Guardians would take their own course, with or without special inquiry of their own as they chose. Complex cases, as I have already said, would remain to be dealt with as now."

Colquhoun, writing in 1806, adopted the distinction between indigence and poverty, which the Poor Law Commissioners employed. And indigence he divided into—(1) "utter inability to procure subsistence"; and (2) "inadequate ability." The problem of relief has always been how to push the second of these classes into *adequate* ability to procure subsistence. The Commissioners (for as the main attack is upon them I again refer to them) decided that provident arrangements should be entirely independent of Poor Law arrangements. They would not have parochial benefit societies on behalf of whose members

[1] See note on p. 267.

the Poor Law was to pay contributions, but independent Friendly Societies. And they have been justified by the event. Similarly, they wished to introduce personal charity and kindness into the workhouses, as workhouse visitors now do, but they wished the administration of charity to be separate. And, again, they have been justified by the event. There is no doubt that the clearer the line has been drawn between charity and the Poor Law, the more has charity risen up to its responsibilities and undertaken tasks which it would not before have attempted. And these forces, acting according to their different methods, have been powerful means of raising to a higher level persons of "inadequate ability." Charity must be voluntary. It should be in the highest degree adaptable to the individual case. It deals with a limited number of applicants. The Poor Law is open to all, and all come to it as of right, if they be destitute. It must therefore work by "fixed rules and tests." This conclusion may be argued both on the ground of theory and experience. If the Poor Law be made charitable, we shall lose the protection of the Poor Law rules and tests without gaining the adaptability of voluntary charity. Applicants will be multiplied, while our means of so dealing with them, as to keep them in the way of self-support, are reduced. Whenever outdoor relief is given as a charity, there is a tendency in this direction. If this be true, a semi-official connection between charity and the Poor Law is not wanted. Charity organisation will get as much influence in furtherance of co-operation as it deserves. Government patronage will hinder rather than help it. There is no difficulty as to passing cases on to the Poor Law. It is not suggested that we should compel people to go into the Workhouse; and now, if unsuitable for charitable relief, they are left to make their own application to the Poor Law. To classification in workhouses much attention is being paid, and since 1866 there has been a continual advance in this matter. The proposed connection between charity and the Poor Law would probably lead to friction and misunderstanding, and interfere with that better co-operation between them that

is steadily growing. And there is good ground for fearing that charity, in receipt of subventions from the State, would soon degenerate into another form of outdoor relief. As to this, the administration in France is to the point. There outdoor relief is partly voluntary, and is granted from funds which are in part made up of subventions from the town or commune, in part from various voluntary sources. It is true that there is investigation, but it is, I venture to think, very insufficient as a means of ascertaining in what manner thorough assistance may best be given; and the relief usually consists of very small allowances or doles. I should conclude (and I speak from personal inquiry) that in France a plan of combination similar to that proposed above is not satisfactory.

Our position at the present time is not unlike that in 1834. Some Unions have shown that if the principles of the Poor Law Commissioners be applied slowly, cautiously, and tentatively, pauperism—even old-age pauperism—may cease out of their areas. Apparently, to many people this is a most objectionable result. They say that the Unions are exceptional: that they have had exceptional chairmen, etc. etc. Well, if it be so, it is only right that exceptional men should lead the way. Let the others follow and pay honour where honour is due. But if Bradfield and Brixworth, St. George's-in-the-East, Stepney, and Whitechapel are to be set aside, there are many other examples. Suggestions may be gleaned from Atcham, Wallingford, Reading, Oxford, Liverpool, the West Derby Union, Birmingham, Manchester, Paddington, and many other places; indeed, from a whole series of Unions of every grade and character. Their methods vary; but the principles of their administration are the same. As Mr. Becher said of Southwell, with lessened outdoor relief inquiry becomes more efficient, and in these circumstances varying weight is given to character in regulating the form in which relief shall be provided. Some give more outdoor relief, some less, some hardly any: and, so far as the evidence goes, it proves that their administration is, in different degrees, producing the same result—the reduction of old-age pauperism. We

may conclude then that, as in 1834, the pre-eminent administration of a few parishes showed the country the way out of the bondage of able-bodied pauperism, so in 1893 the pre-eminent administration of a few Unions and the careful system of relief adopted in others will show the country the way of escape from old-age pauperism, if we are content "in the present condition of the country" to remain on "the firm ground of experience."

Note.—Since the above was written, a complete change has been made in the Poor Law electorate, and in the qualification of candidates for Boards of Guardians. Mr. Fowler, in 1892, reduced the rating qualification of candidates to a minimum. To this change reference is made in the text. Last year the Poor Law clauses were included in the Local Government Act, 1894, and what was little short of a revolution in Poor Law administration was thus effected. The constitution of the Boards of Guardians was one of the fundamental questions settled by the new Poor Law of 1834; and it is remarkable that it was altered without any parliamentary or other inquiry, and with the distinct avowal on the part of the late President of the Local Government Board that it entailed no change in the Poor Law itself, but only a change in the method of electing the administrators of the law. Last year a further alteration was made, also without investigation. By the Outdoor Relief Friendly Societies Act, 1894, permission was given to Boards of Guardians to grant relief to members of Friendly Societies, without taking into account any allowances that they might receive from their societies. Thus, while other applicants may have only "necessary relief," members of Friendly Societies may have more relief than is necessary. The injustice of singling out one form of thrift (for which there are no stronger advocates than members of the Charity Organisation Society) as the object of State bounty is obvious. The result of such alterations, each adopted without regard to Poor Law administration as a whole, and without previous investigation, must be to weaken little by little the chief principle of the Poor Law, referred to on p. 233, on the application of which the great progress made since 1834 has chiefly depended. And now it is proposed (also without previous inquiry) to enable able-bodied men in receipt of relief to retain their parliamentary and even other franchises, when during two months in any one year a union has been declared "distressed" on the recommendation of a Board of Guardians, approved by the Local Government Board. It is clear that if such changes as these are made piecemeal, and sentiment rather than justice is introduced as the ruling factor in Poor Law administration, a considerable increase of pauperism must be expected; and, if it should arise, it will be no indication of greater poverty or destitution among the people, but will be the manifest consequence of the neglect of well-tried and successful principles of administration.

XV

RETURNS AS AN INSTRUMENT IN SOCIAL SCIENCE[1]

By C. S. Loch

"Must we quote figures on a point in which the evidence is so complete and in which every one is convinced by their personal observation? Certainly, for in our day figures only are considered a decisive and conclusive argument." So writes M. Leroy Beaulieu, and proceeds to illustrate by figures the fall in the price of articles of general use during the present century. He is right, and no one now can turn to any book or article on what are called social questions without finding figures used as sticks, staves, and missiles, or as professors' pointers—as means of agitation or of instruction, as decisive and conclusive arguments for the slaughter of opponents or for the information of students.

Here we have to do with figures in the form of parliamentary returns only. Of the legitimate use of returns many instances will occur to you. I will refer to some examples of what appears to me to be their abuse. In considering these we shall pass from criticism to suggestions.

The following two paragraphs are taken from a pamphlet entitled *Facts for Londoners*, and published by the Fabian Society:—

[1] A paper read to the Economic Section of the British Association, Edinburgh, 1892. Reprinted from *C. O. Review*.

In London, one person in every five will die in the workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum. In 1887 out of 82,545 deaths in London, 43,507 being over twenty, 9399 were in workhouses, 7201 in hospitals, and 400 in lunatic asylums, or altogether 17,000 in public institutions. (Registrar-General's Report, 1888, C—5, 138, pp. 2 and 73.) Considering that comparatively few of these are children, it is probable that one in every three London adults will be driven into these refuges to die, and the proportion in the case of the manual labour class must, of course, be much greater.

One in eleven of the whole metropolitan population is driven to accept Poor Law relief during any one year (see p. 20), and that notwithstanding the existence of organised metropolitan charities estimated to disburse over £4,000,000 annually (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiv. p. 833), and that in Middlesex and Surrey there were in 1888, 1,152,189 Post Office savings bank accounts open, with an aggregate balance of £15,410,541 (H. C. 177 of 1889). In spite of all, twenty-nine deaths were referred, in 1888, to direct and obvious starvation (H. C. Return, No. 136, 1889).

These are some of the facts and figures without "which," it is stated, "the Londoner can neither understand his position nor discharge his duties as a citizen." They, amongst others, are cited to show the necessity of moving towards the "common end—the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit." With this end I am not here concerned. I quote the words only by way of explanation, to show that the returns are used as means of agitation. I take them as a notable example, but it is only fair to say that I could give other instances of a similar use of some of these figures in quarters where I certainly have been much surprised to find them.

Deaths in Public Institutions.

In dealing with the question of deaths in public institutions in London, I have taken the figures for 1888, the

year to which other returns in the paragraph refer. The figures in the text are taken from the Report (1887) of the Registrar-General for 1886.

The following are the figures for 1888:—

Divisions and Registration Counties.	Total Number of Institutions.	Total Deaths in all Institutions.	Workhouses.		Hospitals.		Lunatic Asylums.	
			Number of Institutions.	Deaths.	Number of Institutions.	Deaths.	Number of Institutions.	Deaths.
Divisions. No. 1.—London	186	17,663	61	10,170	117	7113	8	380

We will analyse these figures in reference to the first few sentences of the paragraph we have quoted.

First, it will be noted that "workhouse," "hospital," and "lunatic asylum" are taken as equivalent terms, as institutions into which London adults "are driven." But the word "workhouse," as the return itself shows, includes the Poor Law infirmaries and the district hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board for infectious diseases. A workhouse and an infirmary are very different institutions; and still more different is a hospital of the Asylums Board. Since 1867, when the Metropolitan Poor Act was passed, there have been created separate Poor Law infirmaries and sick asylums, to a very large extent taking the place of the old sick wards of the workhouses. These new institutions are good hospitals, well built, sometimes very well nursed, and in many respects as good as, or sometimes better than, many voluntary hospitals. The following is Dr. Gross's evidence in regard to the new St. Saviour's Infirmary, of which he is medical superintendent (p. 626, Second Report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Metropolitan Hospitals, etc.):—

23,553. Do the poor object to going into the Poor Law infirmary in the same degree as they do to going into the Workhouse?—Oh, dear no. They look upon it now as going into the infirmary; the word "workhouse" is never mentioned. "I am going to the infirmary," they say. . . .

23,557. Then they do not necessarily pass through the Workhouse at all?—No; I suppose, perhaps, 40 per cent come through the Workhouse. . . .

23,577. In effect, according to your evidence, the tendency of these infirmaries, however good it may be with regard to the poor, is greatly a tendency to pauperise them?—Certainly. A man comes and looks round the infirmary, and says that, if he has such a place to come to, he is not going to save money to provide for himself. We have that said constantly.

23,578. And you have said also that it undoubtedly prevents them going into provident clubs?—I think so. A man says: "I have nothing to gain by going into a provident club; I am very well treated in the infirmary." They all come in if they have a chance.

23,579. But, legally, does he not become a pauper by going to the infirmary?—Yes, but I do not think he takes notice of that. . . .

23,584. Then, with regard to the infirmary, you do not think that there is the same deterrent effect in offering the relief there in all cases as the offer of the Workhouse had?—No, not at all.

23,585. In the case of the Workhouse their coming in is a test really whether they are genuine cases?—Yes.

23,586. In the case of the infirmary they come in because they find it so good and comfortable, and they do not consider it to be the same thing in effect as going to the Workhouse?—Certainly not.

23,587. And you think there are a great many cases of people who refuse to go to the Workhouse and come to you?—Yes.

I will not point the moral of this evidence. It is sufficient to show that the Workhouse and the infirmary should not be considered as equivalent; that the former may be

deterrent, but that to the latter Londoners certainly are not "driven" but extremely well content to go.[1]

Still less should the Workhouse and the district hospital be taken as equivalent. The district asylums are fever hospitals established on sanitary grounds for the benefit of the whole community. That lunatic asylums should not be included in the same category with workhouses and the rest is equally obvious. The whole implication of the passage, "the driving into these refuges to die," etc., is thus plainly misleading.

And as to voluntary and endowed hospitals, this is equally the case. If we run through the list of hospitals we see this at a glance. To a cancer hospital are registered 102 deaths; to a consumption hospital, 229; to a home for incurables, 6; while also amongst hospitals are included the Herbert Hospital (military) with 42 deaths, and the Royal Arsenal Infirmary with 2. Are such different institutions as these to be put under one hat, as institutions to which the poor are driven to die? This view of hospitals reminds me of Mark Twain's statistical conclusions. After buying many railway insurance tickets and never meeting with an accident he found out the reason why. "Thirteen thousand of New York's millions die in their beds! 'This is appalling!' I said. 'The danger isn't in travelling by rail, but in trusting to those deadly beds. I will never sleep in a bed again.'" So here, by the process of argument which is used, the social inquirer apparently concludes that the evil which he is considering may be judged not by the character and

[1] The following figures show the change that has taken place in regard to the number of deaths in workhouses since Gathorne Hardy's Act (1867). Only institutions in the London Division are included :—

Year.	Deaths in Workhouses.	Deaths in Separate Infirmaries or Sick Asylums.	Deaths in Hospitals and Asylums of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.
1869	7130	9	0
1879	The figures for the workhouse and infirmaries are in the return for this year usually given in one sum.		489
1889	2451	6480	1226

occurrence of the sickness and accidents of life, but by the number of deaths in those deadly public institution beds.

Other evidence shows that artisans who probably earn good wages are in long and difficult illness, quite rightly, admitted to and nursed in hospitals. Thus, a list of patients at the Royal Free Hospital made at the time of the last census shows that amongst the men were an engine-driver, engine-firemen, carpenters, and joiners, a brass-worker, compositors, and so on. The list of occupations published, for instance, by the St. George's Hospital points to the same conclusion. Other evidence is given in the lists of the Hospital Saturday Fund; lodges of Foresters and Odd Fellows and other societies subscribe to the hospitals through it, and so do the employees at many important firms. The hospitals are not institutions to which they are driven, but from which they acknowledge that they derive benefit. Further, at some hospitals a large number of the cases are accidents. The Report of the Charing Cross Hospital for 1888 states that the accident room cases were 9735, of which 1722 were made in-patients. The total number of the in-patients in that year was 1870.

The better the provision made for the sick, the larger the number that make use of it. The larger, therefore, the number who prefer the hospital or infirmary to their home, or who, suffering from infectious disease, are taken to a hospital, and the larger in consequence the number of deaths in institutions—quite apart from any question of medical treatment or hospital sanitation. The argument of the paragraph, on the other hand, amounts to this: the greater the number of the poor treated in hospitals and infirmaries, the worse the condition of the poor—which is manifestly absurd. As a matter of fact, as the hospitals and infirmaries have increased in number and improved, to a much greater extent have they been used, and relatively —as one would expect—the number of deaths in them has increased. This is clearly shown by reference to previous returns of the Registrar-General.

Another point. Though the figures in the *Facts for*

Londoners are quoted correctly, if the deaths that took place in the Metropolitan Division only be summed up, yet as a statement of the total number of deaths of Londoners in London institutions they are incorrect; and this for two reasons. It is estimated that from 1400 to 1500 non-Londoners die annually in London institutions. Of this no account is taken in *The Facts*. And there are many London Poor Law institutions and lunatic asylums outside the Metropolitan Division; all these are overlooked. Thus, at the London County Asylum, Wanstead, there were in 1888, 321 deaths; at Cane Hill, 112. At the Metropolitan Asylum for Imbeciles, near Dartford, there were 107 deaths; at the Strand Workhouse and Infant Establishment at Edmonton, 79 deaths. And there are many other entries which should be brought into the account, if the number of deaths in London institutions is to be correctly stated.

Lastly, the return is misapplied. To enumerate the deaths in institutions is necessary for two purposes. The numeration shows what allowance is to be made for such deaths in the totals of local mortality, and whether from year to year, and in the comparison of one hospital with another, there is a rise or fall in what may possibly be preventable hospital mortality. As has been said of parables, returns must be interpreted in reference to the purposes for which they were compiled. Then, with regard to the words "considering that comparatively few of these are children," it may be pointed out that in 1890—and the same would hold good of 1888—children's hospitals alone account for nearly 900 of the 7600 deaths in hospitals; and to these would have to be added deaths of children in general hospital wards, infirmaries, etc. Of the rest of the paragraph, depending, as it does, on a return so entirely misused, I need say nothing.[1]

[1] It is interesting to note that at the recent election of the London County Council, the argument of one in every *four* (it is now *four*, not three) being driven to die in a public institution was revived. And it formed the subject of a graphic picture—the fourth person, a ragged, miserable old woman, standing within the walls of her captivity, and the three

The "Starvation" Returns.

I will now pass to the words:—

"In spite of all, 29 deaths were referred in 1888 to direct and obvious starvation." The "in spite of" refers to the large number of paupers, the large amount of charity, and the large amount held in savings banks. Of the last it is only right to remark that, thrown in, in order, as it would seem, to show the hopelessness of thrift as a means of deliverance, it is an altogether insufficient statement; and as to the second, it is worth while to set the words of the *Encyclopædia* side by side with those in the paragraph, for there is not a little difference between them. The words in the paragraph are: "Notwithstanding the existence of organised metropolitan charities estimated to disburse over £4,000,000 annually." The words in the *Encyclopædia* are: "The annual income of the various charitable institutions in London is now over £4,000,000, *of which at least three-fourths is spent in London.*" This statement, judging from the context, excludes the endowed charities, which are mentioned immediately afterwards. It includes all the voluntary institutions, of which in 1888-89 the total income, according to Howe's *Classified Directory*, was £5,063,137. Of this £2,131,058 was available for Bible, Book, and Tract Societies, Home and Foreign Missions, and Church and Chapel Building Funds, and £462,992 for Education and Apprenticeship. The disbursement for purposes of relief is thus not £4,000,000, but, according as Education and Apprenticeship be included or not, £2,932,079 or £2,469,087.

Of the estimate of pauperism I will speak later. Now as to the starvation cases:—

Returns should not be used without previous reference to the series of which they form part. I have shown this in regard to the returns of mortality in London institutions.

persons outside free to go about as they pleased. Pictorial statistics are among the latest inventions for confusing popular thought and overmastering popular intelligence by mere agitation.

The starvation returns are another instance. The following table gives the "Deaths in the Metropolitan District, upon which a coroner's jury have returned a verdict of 'death from starvation,' or 'death accelerated by privation,'" since 1871 :—

Deaths (Starvation, etc.), Metropolitan District.

Year.	Total.	Year.	Total.
1871	100	1881	54
1872	103	1882	55
1873	107	1883	44
1874	11	1884	37
1875	46	1885	37
1876	44	1886	40
1877	71	1887	32
1878	77	1888	29
1879	80	1889	27
1880	101	1890	31

The decade, it is evident, shows a marked decrease in these cases, and the figures for 1888 were at that time the smallest on record, except the year 1874, to which I will refer again. Probably the writer did not think of this; if he had, it would have weakened his argument. But the error is frequently committed of taking one year's return only. Mr. Charles Booth commits it, it appears to me, in dealing with two groups of unions in support of his theory that there has been a general lack of improvement in Poor Law administration. So, too, does Mr. Moore Ede, who also adopts without reserve the statements which I have been criticising as to mortality in public institutions in London. He divides the funds of the large Friendly Societies by the number of members, and concludes that "the formidable total represents £1 to £7 per member, and, as most of these are heads of families, the stored-up wealth of each household is small." If we turn from such a statement to the comparison of 1876 and 1886, made by the Registrar of Friendly Societies in his Report for 1890, we find that the estimated growth of societies with and without branches is in membership 1,079,500—that is, from

6,392,745 to 7,472,245,—and of funds, £1,466,988—that is, from £20,352,256 to £21,819,244. This includes a multitude of small insurances against sickness and death, apart from other savings and investments—by no means a hopeless position.

Of the evil of ignoring the historical context of a return, perhaps a word more should be said. Some writers, and in turn their readers, naturally dwell upon the badness of the present state of things, the dark background to the proposals of deliverance which are about to be advocated. Now these proposals and their results are in the main an unknown quantity. They presuppose new conditions of one kind and another, and cannot in themselves contain the material out of which we can frame a standard for our guidance. They are the subject-matter to which we would apply our rule and measure, and nothing more. Our standard of judgment must be found outside them, and it can only be found in previous experience. With all its uncertainties, what our people have done and are doing is a better guide than what under assumed conditions they are likely to do. To use returns without reference to history is to deprive us of their help as a standard of judgment and criticism, and to ignore either that power of growth which is in a series of returns measured for us unconsciously, and upon which all progress ultimately depends, or else that decadence, an analysis of which, if there be decadence, will show us where the evil lies.

But we must go back to the "Starvation" Return. The cases are not all cases of "direct and obvious starvation." Here is No. 1:—

A man unknown, about 60 years of age, inquest on whom was held on 18th January 1888. He was not receiving outdoor relief at the time of his death, nor had been offered or refused admission to the Workhouse. He was found dead, lying in a doorway. The verdict was, "Serum on the brain and disease of the kidneys, accelerated by cold and exposure."

No. 2 is Eliza Duggan, 9 Brighton Street, St. Pancras, wife of Michael Duggan, labourer, 40 years of age; the

inquest was held on 21st January. The deceased was receiving "outdoor relief, medical attendance, 1s. and food one day," and had not been offered admission to the Workhouse. The verdict was, "Pleurisy and bronchitis, accelerated by want of proper nourishment and medical treatment, owing to the poverty of the deceased and her husband, and the absence of forethought on the part of her husband to obtain parochial relief."

Another is the case of an infant who had died of "exhaustation from rickets, accelerated by insufficient and improper nourishment from neglect of parents."

Our law as to cases of sudden and urgent necessity is about as strong as it could be; and the desire to give immediate relief in such cases could not well be greater. These instances, it appears to me, are not, as is stated, "referred to direct and obvious starvation," but to many other causes besides, such as disease, mal-administration perhaps, and parental neglect. Further, of how doubtful a character the verdict really is may be shown, amongst others, by a case that happened in 1890. The verdict on the death of a child of twelve months, named Dulk, was "Death from want of proper nourishment." The coroner's officer spoke strongly of the destitution of the parents; the jury subscribed £1 : 5s., and outsiders sent other contributions. As a matter of fact, for nine weeks previous to and including the date of the birth of his child, the father had been in steady work and had earned in that period £19. Before that he had been earning for six months with another employer 25s. a week, and he could have continued to work with a previous employer at 40s. a week, if he had chosen to do so.

I referred to the year 1874. In that year and in 1875, in the central division of the metropolis, the number of "starvation cases was only seven." In 1873, the previous year, it was 76. Amongst these were 43 infants. In 1874 there were no infants; in 1875, 2; and we note that during 1874 a new coroner succeeds. Hence we cannot but conclude that in that year there was a change of policy, and with it a decrease in the number of starva-

tion cases, which never in that division have risen to their former figures, while especially is it apparent that there has been more discrimination in the verdicts on children.

All this shows, it seems to me, that a return should not be used without reference to its historical context or without reference to its social context; also that returns, however definite in form, require to be analysed before use, so that the reality of their definitions may be tested; and that special care must be taken in any generalisation to explain the differences of the units, as well as their similarity. A return so used may be instructive. Not so used, it may be of service to the agitator as a missile; it is a weapon not of science but of combat.

Poor Law Returns.

These conclusions are further supported by the few words I shall say about the Poor Law returns. "One in 11 of the whole metropolitan population," says the text, "is driven to accept Poor Law relief in one year." It is explained that these figures are arrived at by multiplying by $3\frac{1}{2}$ the number of the recipients of poor relief on a single day. But of the true meaning of the figures and of their social context, or of the difference of the units that are here totalled together, not a word is said.

First, as we have seen, the number is increased by the greater attraction of the infirmaries and the greater facilities for Poor Law medical relief. If this be a good result, as the writer of *The Facts* would seem to hold, why quote the figures as a sign of social trouble? They are *pro tanto* the result of a policy of which the writer elsewhere approves, not of a policy against which he has a grievance. Next, all the lunatics, imbeciles, and idiots, numbering as many as 15,652 on 1st January 1888, are included amongst those "driven" to accept poor relief. What could be more misleading? Surely our better provision for the afflicted should be counted to the credit, and not to the discredit, of the nation. In a fair statement of

the pauperism of the metropolis for the use of an ordinary reader they should be expressly referred to as affecting the total or else omitted. And there are further important considerations. As appears from a further subdivision of the returns recently adopted, some 3000 adults receive indoor relief as temporarily disabled. Over 14,000 are the children of not able-bodied parents. In individual cases the amount of permanent relief, in and out, is large. Very rightly, on the other hand, much of the relief is given only for a short period; and some of it is so trifling in amount that it is a question whether it should not, if supplied at all, be provided from charitable sources.

The following is a note of an analysis of 35 out-relief cases taken at random from the books of one relieving officer's district:—

In 25 cases a medical order or (9) admission to the infirmary was given, with, in most instances, small pecuniary help averaging between 3s. and 4s. In one case the father had broken his arm. In two cases, some of the children of men admitted to the infirmary were sent to the district school; in one three of the children of a widow. A permanent allowance of 4s. 6d. a week was given to a widow who suffered from lung disease and had three children. The out-relief in one instance consisted in 1s. 6d. for cab hire to take a man to the infirmary; in another £1 : 5s. was paid for the funeral of an infant.

Pauperism from this point of view then means many things and not one. And this affects greatly the question of the multiplier to be used to ascertain from the number of paupers on a single day what their number in a year is likely to be. Properly, we should have several multipliers according to the nature of the pauperism. That the multiplier of the total pauperism of a single day is 3½ has long been a moot point, upon which the evidence is decidedly unfavourable. Probably it is much less. Yet in a paper for London citizens it is remarkable that the plain uncertainties of the question are evaded. A telling statistic is put forward on the basis of a very doubtful calculation. Mr. J. R. Hollond's Return (1881), which, as Mr. C. Booth

points out, has been overlooked in this discussion, gives for England and Wales 31 per 1000 as the ratio of a year's pauperism to population—that is, 3.1 per cent, or 1 in 32. And for London its figures are 60 per 1000, 6 per cent, or 1 in 16. But this return is for six months only, and includes lunatics, etc., for whom it gives no separate classification; and these, I think, should be deducted or calculated separately.

Returns re *Old-Age Pauperism.*

I now pass from the question of the use and abuse of returns, and I will refer to some returns that appear to me to be incomplete in certain necessary particulars, or insufficient or misleading in the first analysis of the data on which they are based.

An instance of this is Mr. Burt's return of old-age pauperism, which he did not, I understand, obtain in the form he desired. It was very material to the question of old-age pauperism to know what number of those in receipt of relief were in the infirmary or sick wards, and what number in receipt of medical out-relief. This want is to be repaired, it would seem, by the return asked for by the Local Government Board in May last, in which the Guardians are instructed to make a separate entry of those who have received medical and no other kind of relief in the year. But these are likely to be few indeed, as even the brief analysis I have made above shows; for many who apply on account of sickness and receive medical relief receive also general relief, and in all these instances the fact that their application was due to sickness will not appear. Another object of the May return is to ascertain the number of those who, being 65 years of age and older, receive relief in the course of the year. Those who advocate pension schemes will thus, it is thought, know the number of their pauper clients. But this is very insufficient information for such a purpose. The date of the chargeability of the pauper should be known. If the bulk

of the paupers are chargeable before 65, a scheme for the supply of pensions after that age will, so far as pauperism is concerned, be almost entirely nugatory.[1]

Pauper Members of Benefit Societies.

A return, generally known as Lord Lymington's return, professes to give the numbers of paupers in the workhouses of England and Wales on the 31st March 1891, who, having been members of a benefit society, had then from any cause ceased to be members. There is a similar return for 1881, but not including women.

But (1) the return does not show what are the societies referred to, whether friendly societies or collecting societies, or sharing out and yard clubs. If the societies were named it would be of service. The reader could then gauge the value of the return on this point. Now he cannot do so.

[1] Since this paper was written the "May" return, now better known as Mr. Ritchie's return, has been published. It is a return of paupers on the 1st January 1892, and at any time during the twelve months ended Ladyday 1892. Lunatics and vagrants in receipt of indoor relief are included, but vagrants in receipt of outdoor relief and lunatics in asylums, licensed houses, and registered hospitals are not. There is also a separate count of persons in receipt of medical relief only. As has been shown in the *Economic Journal* for September 1894, the figures, in so far as they relate to the year's count in several Unions of the metropolis, are certainly untrustworthy and excessive; and there must be much duplication of entries, especially in the case of vagrants and the more migratory poor between union and union. With this reservation, it may be said that the day count of persons in receipt of relief (including medical relief) was 700,746 against 1,573,074, the year count—that is to say, to obtain the latter figure the former should be multiplied by about 2.2 instead of 3½. Those over 65 in receipt of medical relief alone are returned at 3910 on the 1st January, and 25,477 in the year, out of a total of 268,397 on the day count, and 401,904 on the year count. The comparative smallness of the numbers in receipt of medical relief confirms the view expressed in the text. Of the persons over 65 in receipt of indoor relief, numbering 114,144, many were in infirmaries or sick wards; and all these are excluded from the count of those who "received medical relief *alone*," because, besides receiving medical relief, they were also being maintained within Poor Law institutions. And further, in addition to the 25,477, many would probably receive medical as well as outdoor relief during the year. In regard to chargeability, the question stands much as it did in 1892. See, for the most complete statement respecting it, p. 153, above.

(2) Unless actual documents are produced, it must be very difficult—indeed, almost impossible—for the returning officer to ascertain with accuracy, as the return requires, how long a man has been a member of a society which has broken up. (3) When we note that—*e.g.* at Alton—out of 20 paupers who have ceased to be members 19 had belonged to broken-up clubs, we suspect that the figures point to some single local smash. But whether this be so the return does not show. (4) The extraordinary variations between the years 1881 and 1891 in certain Unions seem inexplicable, except on the ground of inaccuracy in the count on the one or the other occasion. Thus:—

Paupers who had Ceased to be Members.

	1881.	1891.
Kensington	53	24
Chelsea	20	54
St. George's-in-the-East	5	100
Lewisham	72	3
St. Saviour's	59	249

These differences suggest that the judicious pauper knew what to say, and answered according to the manner of the officer who questioned him, and did not seek or obtain documentary evidence. They can hardly be accounted for by any single fact, as, for instance, the inclusion of women in the 1891 returns; and without more information and greater definiteness of entry, the figures seem to be of no service whatever. As they stand, the figures would seem to show that in London, where there is a comparatively low degree of out-relief pauperism and a large extension of the infirmary system, out of 32,403[1] indoor poor (omitting children, infants, and lunatics), 6 per cent had belonged to Friendly Societies of one kind and another, and that 1.5 per cent had ceased to be members because of their society's break-up.

[1] B Return, July 1891.

Elementary Education (Schemes of Charity Commissioners).

Another return[1] I would submit to you. It should show "by counties the schemes for schools made by the Charity Commission since the year 1870, in which charitable funds have been applied to elementary education," and it should state amongst other items "the application of endowment under the scheme, specifying the amount applied to elementary education (*a*) for general maintenance, (*b*) for scholarships or free education, (*c*) for buildings." In the return, then, we look up, say, Ashover, in Derbyshire, and we find these entries against the "endowed school" there: (*a*) Applied for general maintenance—"net income"; (*b*) applied to scholarships—a sum "not exceeding £10 annually"; and (*c*) amount spent on buildings—"proceeds of sale of site of buildings of old school, and of £297 : 10s. stock." A search in the Digest of 1869-70, and the Supplementary Digest of 1891, throws no light on the question. How can one then, after all, find what amount of charitable endowments has in this instance been applied to elementary education? No specific "amount" is stated. What, we ask, is the "net income"? What were the proceeds of the sale of the site and buildings? The return fails to tell us.

These instances must serve my purpose as evidence in favour of the following suggestions:—

(1) When on general grounds it has been decided to compile a return, the form of it might be settled by a select or other committee, and evidence taken from experts in each branch of work to which the return applies. Most of the difficulties in the way of accurate compilation would thus come to light and be tested beforehand. If demand be made for information in the form of a return, which cannot be so supplied, or which, if so supplied, would be insufficient or inaccurate, the proposal might be set aside

[1] Dated "Charity Commission, 31st May 1891, No. 275."

at the outset or care taken that the defects were fully explained.

(2) The return might often be prefaced with a statement setting forth the method upon which the figures are compiled. Thus, take the May return respecting aged paupers. Few will realise the very great probability of serious errors occurring in it in a populous union, unless at least four or five sets of books for two half-years are most carefully checked. Those who use a return should know what are the possibilities of error in the count. A return often sets in motion a large machinery. A Poor Law return in England and Wales may move the hands of some 664 clerks, 760 masters of workhouses, and over 1500 relieving officers; and often their books are not drawn up in a form at all suitable for the supply of the information which is asked.

(3) The preface to a return might also contain further explanatory matter. The Appendix E of the Local Government Board, in which is analysed the nature of the outdoor relief granted on 1st January and 1st July, is a good example of what might more often be done.

(4) The preface also might refer to and give some account of previous returns of a similar nature.

(5) In the "Starvation" returns (and possibly in others, *mutatis mutandis*) some short official account might in each case be published of the proceedings of the coroners' courts, with the names of witnesses and their evidence. A clearer meaning would then be given to the return than is now often the case. It is not possible for most people to look up the reports of proceedings in the public press.[1]

(6) There is published a general index of Bills, Reports of Committees, etc. etc., of the Houses of Parliament from 1801 to 1879. Since that date annual indexes are also published, out of which every ten years a general index

[1] The "Starvation Returns," issued since this paper was written, have been greatly improved by a commentary attached by the Local Government Board to the statistics furnished by the Coroners. This commentary consists of the statements of Boards of Guardians respecting the cases included in the returns in which application was made for Poor Law relief.

for that period is compiled. That for the last decade will now, I understand, be very shortly issued. Might not some society, like the Statistical Society, issue a completer catalogue and subject index, containing very brief statements of the purport of the returns, reports, and papers relative to different branches of social study? Important previous returns are now sometimes overlooked, and even those who are in a measure students of social questions are sometimes ignorant of the material that is to hand.

These suggestions, if adopted, would, I think, lead to greater precision and completeness in some of our returns, and to a less arbitrary and absolute use of them.

Lastly, of the limitations of the return system. I will refer to one point only, touching on a question which concerns other returns besides the parliamentary. Compared with the statistics of social science, it seems comparatively easy to collect the statistics of natural history, if the eye and judgment of the observer be trained. The fine notes made by Mr. Allen on the variation of length of wing and other parts of the body in birds in Florida are an instance of this kind. So are the medical statistics of the Registrar-General, which are compiled by trained members of a profession. The chief difficulty in the latter instance must lie in the changing nature of diseases and their nomenclature. But in the branches of social science that we have been discussing, though we may have a single simple fact to chronicle, we are also at every point touching the domain of character. This in a degree affects the import of all returns as to pauperism, starvation, and old age. It is well to know what number of paupers receive relief on a single day, but we cannot classify them by merit or by misfortune, and only very roughly, and for a purely administrative purpose, as able-bodied and not able-bodied; nor, as the Poor Law is administered, can we conclude that all paupers are destitute. What applies to the pauper class applies still more strongly to attempts at classification and statistic in the classes above them. To find a statistic applicable

to them we must in each case force divergent groups into one class. No one single typical fact marks them as the members of a class. To them not even such a common guiding fact as a receipt of poor relief or of charity is applicable; nor, for instance, is a standard of wage a sufficient test. And, for observers, how poorly off are we! To a naturalist or a medical man the question is always one of fact pure and simple. True, he may have a theory, but that is but a bridge of boats thrown out from a known to a doubtful shore. The social observer is usually pledged to a plan, and his investigation is often but the formal verification of a foregone conclusion. Many instances of this could be given. In some branches of social science the naturalist spirit is rare. Compare any social investigation of our time with the series of investigations which has led up to our understanding how bacteria fix the nitrogen in plants, or with Dr. Nathorst's researches, by which E. Forbes's theory of 1846 as to Alpine flora is definitely proved. In social science, studied without the naturalist's spirit, our statistics may become not error merely, but irremediable error—a maze of figures, which no reader has the clue to unravel. The observer is usually not a trained social naturalist, or even a citizen observing his fellows with any definite or conscious purpose. Frequently he is a person who has in a short time to collect information, often without any large general experience or any informal and natural means of ascertaining and detailing the inner lines of the social conditions which he examines. The true social naturalist would live to watch and think, and his proposals, if he made any, would be as much explanations as proposals, and often the work of a lifetime. If, then, our difficulties are so great, and our skill, impartiality, and patience so much less than in other branches of science, are we not inclined to push the statistical method in social science too far? Should we not substitute for statistics description similar to that which a naturalist might use, content to describe case after case, that so the type may show itself? We would thus avoid the arbitrary distinction of classes, and perhaps find a more natural

division in types—types to be found (to use Mr. C. Booth's terminology), say, in classes A, B, and C, types with similar characteristics in whatever class they may be temporarily located. When one reads a set of cases classed layer by layer according to their relative poverty or riches, one sees that this horizontal division is wrong. No standard of wage or of expenditure gives the true clue. A vertical division by types would be truer, for the type holds good in very different conditions of wage and possibilities of expenditure. The spendthrift type and the makethrift type (to give an example by way of illustration merely) will be found with the same characteristics in all classes, poor or rich, and from the point of view of social science they have to be equally noted and accounted for wherever they may occur. But I only throw this out as indicating one important limitation of social statistical work. My purpose will be served if I can promote what is, in my opinion, a more sober and scientific use of statistical data, and, especially in some of our parliamentary returns, a more precise, instructive, and scientific collection of them.

We want finer instruments and a finer use of instruments.

XVI

SOCIALISM AND NATURAL SELECTION[1]

By B. Bosanquet

My reason for attempting a treatment of this difficult subject is twofold. First, I am greatly impressed by what seems like a lack of thorough patience and goodwill in the controversy on both sides. A student of philosophy has not the special knowledge possessed either by Mr. Huxley or Professor Haeckel in biology, or by Mr. Karl Pearson in mathematics, not to speak of other writers who have entered upon this debatable land perhaps too light-heartedly; but he ought to possess above all things the goodwill and habit of patience which enable him to track out common elements in different phases and processes, and to hold together ideas which the noticeably impatient mind of exact science or semi-political publicism pronounces to be *ab initio* incompatible. I cannot help it if this implication is considered insolent; in the *popular* utterances of natural and exact science nothing strikes one so forcibly as their impatience. And secondly, it appears to me that certain classes of facts known to those closely occupied with administration of charity or of Poor Law relief form at least an important contribution to the problem in question, and that, though touched upon from time to time, they have not been treated with adequate knowledge, and their rather ambiguous import has therefore not been rightly read.

[1] A lecture given before the London Ethical Society.

I will begin by referring to an observation of Lotze which applies very widely to the attitude of our time. "Our own generation, maintaining its opposition to philosophy, endeavours to console itself for its want of clearness in respect to general principles by a vivid exercise of the sensuous imagination. If we come upon pile-dwellings in some forgotten swamp, we piously gather together the insignificant remains of a dreary past, supposing that by contemplating them we shall grow wiser, and learn that which a glance into the affairs of everyday life would teach us with less trouble."[1] Something of this kind is forcibly suggested by the necessity which modern culture appears to be under of attempting to designate well-recognised phenomena of civilised society by names drawn from the evolution of the plant and the lower animal world. We have the struggle for existence, natural selection, and panmixia, asserted and denied to be conditions of human progress, and the absurdity culminates when Mr. Herbert Spencer, in an ethical treatise,[2] speaks of a human society as "a local variety of the species." But where a continuous evolution is concerned, mere difference and mere sameness are more than usually inadequate instruments to express the relation between its stages; what is really needed is very patient and very careful interpretation and analysis directed to tracking the true strand of continuity.

For the sake of clearness, I will at once briefly indicate my conclusion. (I believe in the reality of the general will, and in the consequent right and duty of civilised society to exercise initiative through the State with a view to the fullest development of the life of its members. But I am also absolutely convinced that the application of this initiative to guarantee without protest the existence of all individuals brought into being, instead of leaving the responsibility to the uttermost possible extent on the parents and the individuals themselves, is an abuse fatal to character and ultimately destructive of social life.) The abolition of the struggle for existence, in the sense in which

[1] Lotze, *Metaphysics*, English tr., p. 417.
[2] *Principle of Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 329.

alone that term applies to human societies, means, so far as I can see, the divorce of existence from human qualities; and to favour the existence of human beings without human qualities is the ultimate inferno to which any society can descend. This view, it will be seen, is practically that of Mr. Kidd in his work on *Social Evolution.* In no critical question has patience been more necessary and more wanting than in forming an estimate of that remarkable popular treatise. It is easy to show that Mr. Kidd is neither a scholar nor a philosopher; his estimate of social conditions is, in my judgment, misleading, and it does not appear probable that he is a master of natural science. But all this is no proof that on a particular issue he has failed to hit the nail on the head, and mere candour compels me to say that, in the essential distinction on which his attitude to Socialism is founded, I am fully in agreement with him. I refer to the distinction which he chooses to call that between true Socialism, which aims at arresting competition and guarantees existence without protest to all individuals, and State Socialism, which regulates the competitive struggle while enhancing the efficiency of competition.

Now let us remind ourselves what is the fundamental meaning of the Struggle for Existence as conditioning natural selection in the world of plants, and of animals below man. "I should premise," Mr. Darwin writes, "that I use this term (Struggle for Existence) in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including what is more important, not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny."[1] The examples which follow explain that not only may two dogs, when food is scarce, be said to struggle for food; but a plant on the edge of a desert struggles against drought—that is, is dependent upon moisture, though there is in this case no competition with other plants at all; a plant may again be said to struggle with other plants for the means of disseminating its seed, or, I may venture to add, for the chance of fertilisation by insects, in

[1] *Origin of Species*, ed. 6, p. 50.

which two cases its individual life is in no way or degree necessarily risked in the struggle. That is to say, the organism which wins in the struggle for existence, from the very beginning, is that so adapted to surrounding influences and objects that it not only arrives at maturity, but leaves offspring, to a relatively large extent, under such conditions that they also are likely to arrive at maturity. The "existence" depends upon definite qualities which may no doubt be noxious, or, again, may be beneficial to the objects and creatures in contact with them.

When the struggle for existence is regarded with reference to selection, then in the plants and lower animals a further consideration enters in. The natural resources on which they depend cannot by their action be artificially supplemented, and prudential restraints from leaving progeny cannot exist. This being so, more individuals are produced than can possibly be maintained, and those of the surplus which are not destroyed by other agencies must perish of starvation. Natural selection determines according to their qualities which individuals shall survive and which shall not, and also which individuals shall leave progeny and which shall not. It is thus untrue even of plants and the lower animals to say that natural selection operates *exclusively* through destruction of individuals. In the main, moreover, artificial selection, of which sexual selection is the elementary form, and which need not act at all through extermination of individuals, does not differ in principle from natural selection, so long as it proceeds with a view to qualities which have power to set in motion the selecting agency by means which may be called natural—that is, otherwise than through a sheer conscious desire on its part to guarantee support to all existent individuals as such. For this reason, I suppose, the term natural selection is, and fairly may be, used to cover the processes of competition in society (although in them selection is conscious), so long as in these processes existence, except under protest, is determined by definite qualities which naturally set in motion the selective agency. The true line of demarcation at which the whole principle

underlying natural selection is abandoned, must be where selection ceases to be selective—that is, where any agency guarantees to individuals existence without protest,[1] irrespective of human qualities. Natural selection in the wider sense suggested by this contrast plainly does not operate by starvation, but by varied forms of acceptance, rejection, and discouragement; and, at least, by abstinence from anti-selective action, *i.e.* from retrogressive or negative selection.

Natural selection, then, is the process by which the struggle for existence determines the perpetuation of those stocks or family strains which have qualities most enabling them to conquer or to use their surroundings, especially so as to obtain success in the rearing of offspring. Now, further, the absence of what has been called "selective value" in any quality—that is, its inability to exercise determining influence on the success or non-success of its possessor—withdraws it from the influence of selection, and there is no reason to expect that such a quality will be maintained in efficiency. "Variations" which have no selective value "must disappear again."[2] This result, which Spencer finds in Darwin and himself fully accepts (*loc. cit.*), appears to me—speaking with great diffidence—to contain all that is really important in the disputed principle of "Panmixia," which he rejects. But for our purpose, the transmission of qualities as modified by use and disuse would serve the same purpose. Qualities which are not

[1] I use the term "existence under" or "without protest," because in human society it is impossible forcibly to prevent the production of individuals destitute of co-operative qualities, or to starve them when produced. All that can be done is to express a protest by want of encouragement, or by penalty directed against any visibly in fault, whether parents or individuals themselves.

[2] Herbert Spencer, *Inadequacy of Natural Selection*, pp. 11, 12. Herbert Spencer speaks of "a variation" and of "a faculty." The same rule must surely apply to an organ (cf. *Principle of Ethics*, vol. ii. p. 429). Spencer does not seem to contend that his principle of the transmission of acquired qualities would prevent the destruction of social characteristics by retrogressive selection, and, in fact, the same conditions of environment which would destroy the selective value of these qualities must also ensure their disuse.

imperatively demanded by society will not be maintained either by natural selection or by exercise.

We are now prepared to consider the case of social animals and of human communities. In proportion as exchange of services by division of labour within a group takes the place of competition of all against all, the group itself becomes the primary unit in the struggle for existence. Now, selection as between competing groups can only make adaptations in them by transforming the individuals of which they are composed, and this it is found to do with astounding thoroughness and variety. According to Weismann's recent contention, which seems likely to be justified, selection as between groups has power in the case of social insects to modify even the sterile members of the community by selecting the stocks or families from which sterile members with socially useful qualities are destined to proceed. How then does group selection affect the relations of the members of the community to each other? Plainly, I think, in this way, that the competition of communities without operates by means of the competition of individuals within. By the necessities of the community certain conditions are imposed on life within the community, and the "existence" struggled for, which even at first, as we saw, included the successful rearing of progeny, now includes the conditions, be they less or more, which attach to one or another form of co-operative living.[1] The struggle for existence has, in short, become a struggle for a place in the community; and these places are reserved for the individuals which in the highest degree possess the co-operative qualities demanded by circumstances. The bee or ant has been precisely moulded to every detail of its work by this form of natural selection; and I take it that that community has always been victorious in which a place has been denied to those individuals in whom the co-operative qualities were absent. Where, however, as in the case of the bee, there are no competing stocks within the community, the absence or destruction of useless individuals is a consequence of group-modification and essential to its full effect, but is

[1] Frequently, of course, in the social insects, involving sterility.

hardly in its turn a perpetuating cause of such modification.

If we now turn to human society, we find that the so-called "existence," which is the aim of the so-called "struggle," has received a yet further accretion of qualities. Although it would be obviously a blunder to say that every human individual aims at the common good—for if so, every one would be moral—yet it is true that the existence which any human beings regard as tolerable is made what it is by ideas which depend on a social conception—in short, by a standard of life. Further, it is very noticeable and very natural that, owing to the freedom allowed by an aim presented to intelligence, the conflict of stocks within the group revives in human society as not only an effect but a cause of group-modification, seeing that some stocks perish and others survive within the group, by reason of their respective qualities.

Now, at this point, I must recur to the subject of my opening remarks. We have gained but little by applying inadequate conceptions, drawn from the life of plants and of lower animals, to the life of man. The struggle for existence, and the process of natural selection, especially when understood by popular science and publicism in a way far more crude and less pregnant than that indicated by Darwin himself, are terms which do not adequately designate the phenomena of human adaptation. But the worst evil which has come from applying these, as Lotze says of other conceptions, without so much as a glance at the affairs of everyday life, has not been of the most obvious kind. It is bad enough that a fundamental truth should be crudely and rudely formulated and misapplied, because people think it modern and up to date to use conceptions drawn from anything else rather than from our experience of the matter in hand. For this evil we have largely to thank Mr. Herbert Spencer, and in spite of his great abilities and untiring industry, or rather because of them and their abuse, I think that a Dante of philosophers ought to grant him the distinction of the lowest circle in the inferno. But the more terrible evil, a natural consequence of the former, is that the fundamental truth, having got

into low company, is repudiated as a disreputable acquaintance by the impatient purist among social reformers, and things which were known 2000 years ago, and which are obvious, as I am forced to believe, to those who look straight at the facts in question, are disputed because of the 'new-fangled analogies' which are meant to support, but which really disguise, them.

Unquestionably, in human society, instincts and tendencies are modified by ideas. A human community does not aim at mere survival, but at a certain kind of survival; and rather than survive on certain terms, a decent society would choose destruction. A human individual, again, does not aim at mere survival, but at a certain kind of survival; and although, in the general interests of humanity, it is considered right to cling even to bare existence, yet in spite of this scruple, a being with full human qualities will readily forfeit such existence in preference to endangering these qualities in itself or in others. This we see in the phrase, "All that makes life worth living." It is, therefore, I submit, a fatal misconception by which Mr. Huxley tells us[1] that in human society the struggle is not for existence but for enjoyment; rather, the struggle is for a certain kind of existence, and failure to secure this entails, on the whole, immediate or rapid extinction of the particular stock which fails. Under a similar misconception, it is alleged that survival of the fittest is nothing more than survival of the fittest to survive. No one can deny that there are eddies and back currents in the river of life; but a complete discontinuity between the principles of nature and of humanity is extremely improbable, especially if we consider that the latter has come into being by the processes of the former. And this improbability is intensified to impossibility when we examine from the logical side the nature of those victorious ideas which have imposed themselves as moral upon the human race, for they are seen to be marked throughout by organic quality—by the power of arranging life and dealing with circumstance; and it is precisely this quality, however caricatured in some phases

[1] *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 40.

of its growth, which forms the essential strand in the development of living things. Those may sneer at strength who do not believe that reason is the ultimate power, but those who hold a different conviction cannot but judge that the survival of the most vigorous in the struggle for the existence which is aimed at, is, on the whole, the survival of the most reasonable. I repeat emphatically, "in the struggle for the existence which is aimed at," for vigour is a term relative to circumstances; and the most vigorous in a struggle determined by one standard of life is the weaker in that determined by another. We have to consider, then, not only the bare fact of survival, but the nature of the struggle in which survival has to be sought. "It is for us to struggle," said Aristeides to Themistocles, "both now and ever, which of us shall perform the greatest services to his country." But, emphatically, the development is continuous; the struggle of Aristeides is an arduous struggle still, and competition is not less but more strenuous in proportion as its purpose is more complexly determined. Does any one seriously doubt that there are in every society worse and better varieties, always remembering that the minimum test of excellence, by success in the struggle for existence, involves *from the first* capacity to give the progeny a good chance of maturity—in short, to furnish what we call good birth and breeding?

And, once more, the conception of panmixia in the general import, in which, as I think, Spencer himself affirms it, applies by analogy to human society. If selection for certain qualities ceases, the qualities in respect of which it ceases cannot maintain themselves; and if worse varieties—those of bad birth and breeding—are encouraged to perpetuate themselves, does any one doubt (what Plato already knew) that society must deteriorate?

But, it is asked of us, can there be the same cosmic process in society as in lower nature, when in society you can in some degree restrict the reproduction of individuals so as not to exceed the food-supply, and in nature there is perpetual excess of multiplication over the means of subsistence? Does the pressure on which the struggle

depends exist at all in society? Mr. Huxley is inclined to say that this is so to a very small extent,[1] and that therefore the processes are not the same in kind. But first, as the supply of necessaries for civilised life is wholly produced by labour, every individual born is *prima facie* in excess until he justifies his existence by definite qualities. For if not, why should some one else work that he may eat? This is at once a powerful pressure in the way of producing selection, and a source of resistance to all multiplication. Secondly, if multiplication is restricted, the restriction must be either selective or non-selective. If non-selective, it is *not restriction* for our purpose, for it may well chance to diminish the supply of necessaries, which is wholly artificial, more than it diminishes the population. If selective, it is *not opposed to the cosmic process*, but itself effects the same end in a presumably less painful though analogous way. This argument from the apparent absence of severe pressure in civilised communities really shows that if society is to prosper, the cosmic process of selection by definite qualities is, and must be, continued in them perhaps *under the name of restriction.* And this Mr. Huxley recognises by his simile of the garden, the difference between which and wild nature depends chiefly on the despotic selection of the horticulturist. The requirements of despotic selection, which Plato too made an absolute condition of his artificial society, Mr. Huxley sees to be impracticable because of the incapacity of man,[2] to which I will add the deeper reason that no despotic selection can exercise the causal action which belongs to the human analogue of natural selection. It is a question throughout not merely of birth but of breeding—"success in leaving offspring" in the widest sense—and in human society the breeding or training is almost the more important condition for preservation of offspring. But quality of breeding material

[1] *Loc. cit.*

[2] A probable instance of this struck me in relation to the modification of sterile individuals; probably Plato's government would try to breed from geniuses, but it may be that geniuses are fitted to be the last offshoots of vigorous races, and that to get them you must breed not from them but from such stocks as produce them, which is more difficult.

and moral upbringing for a human being, operating mainly through ideas and expectations, cannot be secured without definite conditions which mere despotic selection within a wholly uncompetitive society would absolutely exclude. No social selection—I do not shun the paradox—no social selection can be moral except natural selection in the large sense explained below; for it alone operates through character and through ideas.

I will now indicate what I conceive to be the true analogue of natural selection in human society, and I will name it at once as comprising two elements: first, the moral and material responsibility of the family; and secondly, the direct interference of society and the State, considered more especially as abstaining or not abstaining from retrogressive selection. It is not the action of the spur of hunger nor the greed of gain; these are not human motives, and each of them is operative, as Huxley rightly implies of the former, throughout only a small section of society, strictly perhaps not at all. If you reply that the spur of hunger is a phrase for the desire to live, and to live a human life, then I say that it is an ill-chosen phrase, used on both sides, we must remember, in this controversy, and that we can never obtain a correct analysis of anything till we are careful to say what we mean. That existence even on the lowest plane of our society involves a standard of life and not mere animal needs, is shown by the fact that to many aliens English slum or workhouse life appears a paradise.

First, then, of the family. The Western monogamic family as we know it is neither opposed to the State nor independent of it; it is largely the creation of Roman law, is supported by the law in all civilised countries, and could be destroyed or disfigured beyond recognition by indifferent or hostile State action. Now, broadly speaking, the co-operative individual, as demanded by civilised life, can only be produced in the family, and therefore by a stock capable of forming a true family; and the test and engine of his production is the peculiar form of moral responsibility, supported by law and covering both material and moral incidents, which the family implies. Its unique

importance as an agent of selection arises, of course, from the fact that to the family is entrusted the multiplication of the species, and its automatic action as a selective agency depends on the recognition of the principle that this union should only be entered on where the conditions of success in the struggle for a distinctively human existence, including as throughout a proper rearing of offspring, may be reasonably anticipated. The question of population is not a mere numerical question; of some qualities of population it is impossible to have too much, for they are self-limiting, of others every individual is in excess. The main difference between these kinds of population depends on the material and moral responsibility for the family being left with those who have voluntarily formed it, and on every possible discouragement being thrown in the way of unions taking place where the true conditions of family life do not exist. I say, then, that the struggle to realise the conditions of true family life in its moral and material senses is the human "struggle for existence" within the group, and that defeat in this struggle does largely entail, and ought as far as possible to entail, the extinction of the stock so failing. The moral responsibility on its material side is one which, above all, needs care and patience in analysing. Even if it includes, by misfortune, the need of meeting the pressure of hunger, it is not the mere appetite so described; the need of providing necessaries and decencies for wife and child is not mere greed or hunger in the man. But although I repudiate such phrases as "the necessity of the spur of hunger," I fully recognise the fact that an absolutely secured material position, such as that of the wealthy class, is not favourable, on the whole, to productivity in the interests of society; and I desiderate for every one, for their own sake, some possibility of falling into distress by lack of wisdom and exertion. It is not the same thing, however, to hold a position which, with all its possibilities as a human life, may easily be forfeited through indolence or folly, and to be urged on by the mere animal terror of starvation. The former is that scaffolding or

support afforded to the internal by the external conscience (to use George Eliot's phrase) which no one need be ashamed of requiring. We are all of us at times poor creatures; and the most high-minded is none the worse for being kept up to his work. But the latter is an animal motive; and I doubt whether, in a technical sense, it can ever be rightly identified with the mainspring of a true human life. Yet none the less, the large fact is that natural selection by the struggle for existence is, in the sense I have indicated, essential to the prosperity of human society, and the means of this selection is the fullest recognition both by law and by public opinion of the responsibility attaching to the author of a family, both for its material and for its moral requirements.

Time does not permit me to analyse fully the drift and import of modern sentiment and legislation regarding the family. My point is sufficiently clear if I explain that such analysis should be directed to distinguishing between two movements which have much in common—which, in fact progress in curves perhaps even coincident for a portion of their arcs. The free school, the improved and co-operative dwelling and factory, the library, the club, and the permanent organisation of labour, may all of them be agencies for ennobling and enlarging the family life and making its basis more solid. It is also possible that they, or extensions of them, may be made agencies for destroying it. And here we come face to face with the direct selective or anti-selective action of the State, or of wholesale philanthropy.

I wish very distinctly to insist that this is also capable of two directions, and that the problems arising are not to be solved by administrative nihilism, but by care and analytic experience and patient continuance in well-doing. But subject to this reservation, I desire to call attention to the frightful dangers that attend any over-riding of what is relatively natural selection through family responsibility, by the direct interference of administrative or other philanthropy. I do not at all deny that sometimes the evils caused by partial interference may demand completer interference. Time only permits me to indicate a few typical points.

I begin by a general statement applying to our whole social life which very clearly emphasises the difference between the improvement of surrounding conditions of life, and the operation of natural selection in the extinction of the worst varieties. It is alleged[1] that the Registrar-General's analysis of the death-rate for the period from 1858 to 1890, distinguishing the causes of death preventible by improved surroundings from those dependent on hereditary constitution, shows the former to be diminishing, but the latter to be increasing in their operation. This would mean that the weakly, who are saved from neglect and from acute disease, live past the time of child-bearing, only to fall victims to constitutional ailments which, meantime, they have transmitted to descendants. Life is longer, but death from old age is rarer than thirty years ago.[2] If this is true, and I give it with some reserve, the inference is plain. The severer selective agencies have been arrested by improved surroundings; but family responsibility, the only practical substitute, has not yet operated in their place, and the race is less robust.

Passing from this general tendency to the direct action of the State, we find, of course, that, to some extent inevitably, the *Poor Law* encourages an element of the population for whom the family does not exist, or who are preserved only to hand on to others the defects which, but for our elaborate hospitals and infirmaries, would have perished with them. Particularly frightful in this connection is the case of those known as feeble-minded pauper girls, who become recurrent inmates of the workhouses, where the best medical attendance is furnished to them, and of whose children the kindest-hearted woman will often say, "*fortunately* the child died." Here it may be that a further interference may help. These girls are not fit to protect themselves in the world, and though they cannot be certified as proper inmates for a lunatic asylum,

[1] Haycraft, in *British Medical Journal*, 24th February 1894. See *Darwinism and Race Progress*, by this author, about to be published by Sonnenschein and Co.

[2] The appearance of this is partly owing to increased accuracy of diagnosis.

it seems possible to prevent the evils that attach to their life and its perpetuation by some form of attractive custodial home.

And apart from the question of medical care as such, there is no doubt that the public provision for the destitute must to some extent, and may to a terrible extent, be the cause of early and reckless marriages which fulfil no moral nor material conditions of the union, of desertion of wife and children, and of irregular unions. In all these cases, besides the direct evil of ill-nurture, a bad variety is almost certainly perpetuated.[1] I forbear at this late hour to introduce the whole miserable story of the old Poor Law, with its payment per head for children born out of wedlock, by which it was rightly said that the English law had abolished chastity. If any one thinks that wholly and in principle these evils have now been annihilated, he is unacquainted with the subject, and with the difficulties inherent in a system which is bound to deal humanely with all comers of every kind, and therefore cannot but be in some degree a refuge in which the wreckage of society refits, only to be wrecked again to the lasting injury of the community. The typical case of the American Jukes family, 1200 descendants of which, in seven generations, were estimated to have cost £260,000 in prison expenses and public relief, is an example of the worst varieties, which, with the best administration, are not easily extinguished, and with every laxity multiply like a bacillus.

Now the general conclusion which I desire to draw is not in the direction of recurring to severity against the helpless, but it urges the absolute necessity of regarding all these interferences as unavoidable evils and not as precedents for more general action. We should make them thorough and effective where they are essential, and convert, where possible, the very treatment which might otherwise encourage a bad variety into a hindrance to its per-

[1] At present, in a case of which I have information, five illegitimate children of a single pair are being maintained by the ratepayers. Being unmarried, the father cannot be compelled to maintain them except by procedure initiated by the mother. She will take no action, and he can laugh at the public. See also IV.

petuation, as by the seclusion of the hopeless inebriate and the feeble-minded girl-pauper, or by the best possible nurture of the pauper child, the almost insuperable difficulty of which shows the hazard of the whole system. We should avoid in every way the protrusion of analogous interference into the healthy life of the industrial class. We should never forget that the system is a necessary evil, nor ever handle our public initiative, whether through the Poor Law or through more general legislation, so as to relieve the father of the support of the wife and children, or the grown-up child of the support of his parents. We should raise no expectation of help, or of employment invented *ad hoc*, which may derange the man's organisation of life in view of the whole normal responsibilities which, as a father, he has accepted. Whether by any particular measure we are destroying a man's responsibilities or helping him to face them is in each case, so to speak, a question for the jury. The distinction of principle is all that I plead for in this page.

The same points are illustrated by the results observed from the action of vast voluntary agencies whose operations approach in magnitude those of the State. I read a couple of extracts from a trustworthy Report from East London. This is a Report from experienced people, who, having been asked to help cases of the kind referred to, have gone into them carefully in detail. The question is the old one of the effect of Shelters and Refuges.

Such shelters[1] confer no real or permanent benefit on those who use them; they are not centres of reform, and they do not restore their inmates to independence or self-support. They are merely places of temporary lodging, from which their inmates go away in the same condition as that in which they arrived, if not in a worse one. So far from lessening the number of destitute people without regular means or employment, they tend to increase it, because they make the life of the shiftless and the idle more easy, and so offer a new temptation

[1] This letter has since been published as a letter from the Whitechapel Committee of the C.O.S. in *C.O. Review*, November 1894.

to those who are too willing to live, as far as possible, at the expense of others.

Beyond this, these refuges appear to us to make it easy for husbands and wives to evade their mutual responsibilities, and to neglect the education and proper bringing up of their children. We have met with instances of the husband being in one shelter, the wife and children in another; or of the husband altogether deserting his family and living away from them, apparently doing little for his own support, and nothing for theirs; whilst they, in the refuges, are supported by the charitable. In regard to the children of those who frequent these institutions, it is almost inevitable that they should suffer morally and physically from the nature of their surroundings. There is no discrimination in regard to the admission of inmates, many of whom are of the most degraded character, and the least fitted to associate with the young or respectable.

As a rule, children from the refuges do not attend school, and it is very difficult for the School Board, in their case, to exercise their legitimate authority. We know, as a fact, that parents and children are turned into the streets from morning till evening to pass the day as best they can, sitting or standing about in public places, and often, no doubt, employed in begging. This must be bad alike for mind and body.

We believe that in this district, at any rate, the evil is on the increase, *and is having an appreciable effect upon the population of the district.*[1] I may mention as an instance of this, that the superintendent of one of the shelters said, that the average number of those who passed through it is 1500 per month. They are not allowed to remain more than three days at a time in the shelter, but may return after a short interval, which is usually spent in other institutions of the same kind.

I quite understand that to many hearers this will appear an isolated piece of grumbling, and in no way typical of rocks ahead in social interference by retrogressive selection. But I venture to think that to those who have attended both in detail and in principle to the history and symptoms of the social problem, it is merely a rather striking example

[1] The italics are mine.

of what everyday and universal experience both of State and of wholesale private action has long made familiar.

I am therefore convinced that the general distinction on which Mr. Kidd has lighted in his treatment of modern Socialism is sound in principle. If Socialism means the improvement of society by society, we are going on that track more or less to-day, as civilised society has always gone, and the collective organisation of certain branches of production is a matter open to discussion with a view to its consequences. But if Socialism means the total suppression of the personal struggle for existence, as above described, and the collective guarantee of support to all children, or still worse to all adults, without enforcing the responsibilities of parents or of sons and daughters, then I think that it really is in hopeless conflict with the universal postulates of the struggle for existence and natural selection, as justly interpreted of human society. Experience has amply shown that such conditions operate on man as panmixia operates among lower organisms. The worst varieties throughout the whole community are perpetuated equally with the best, and if we believe in inherited degeneration by disuse, then for this reason too social qualities must in such conditions degenerate. The best are indeed heavily handicapped by having to support the others, and the tendency is for the whole community to lose the efficiency of its human qualities. An aim of the kind has quite certainly been suggested by some Socialist writers[1]—I mention Mr. Bellamy, and, so far as concerns the children, explicitly, Mr. Blatchford;[2] see also Mr. Shaw[3]

[1] And see generally the manifesto of English Socialists signed, among others by the Fabian Society, urging "the free maintenance of all necessitous children," not, it will be observed, suggesting any restriction to the children of necessitous parents, nor any attempt to remove, in each case, the evil of which the children's need is a symptom.

[2] *Merrie England*, p. 19: "I say there is no need for any struggle for existence," p. 44; "I would have all our children fed and clothed and educated at the cost of the State."

[3] *Fabian Essays*, "Transition," p. 200, first edition: "One can see that the economic independence of woman, and the supplementing of the head of the household by the individual as the recognised unit of the State, will materially alter the status of children and the utility of the institution of the family."

and Mr. Wallas,[1]—but I attach less importance to the avowed aim than to the intellectual drifting which makes leeway towards a result of this kind, under the influence of precedents such as the Poor Law or Free Education, first theoretically misunderstood and then practically distorted step by step. I have attempted this evening to indicate the confusion and its source.

[1] *Fabian Essays*, p. 146: "If we wish to wean the children from the selfish isolation of the English family." The passage from Morris and Bax, quoted by Professor Flint in *Socialism*, p. 284, throws a painful light on the attitude of some Socialists to the family.

XVII

THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

By B. Bosanquet

1. There is apt to be a confusion between the history of property and the reason of its existence. "Property," it has been said, "originates in 'first occupancy' or 'appropriation.'" But this amounts to the truism that there must be appropriation if there is to be property, and assigns no reason either why there is or why there ought to be property. So with "force," or "enactment by the sovereign"; the right of property, like all rights, depends on social recognition, and no right can be explained by force, though society must be possessed of force to repress encroachments upon rights. "Contract" again presupposes "property," and does not account for it. One cannot acquire a thing by contract unless it already is property, nor contract that there shall be property unless social recognition already exists. Or, it is said, "Property arises from labour" (Locke), *i.e.* because a man's person is his property, therefore the work of his hands is his property. But this, again, is no explanation. It suggests that property is recognised on the same ground as a man's right to be his own master, but does not say what that ground is.

The true reason is the recognition of a common good by the members of a society, as realised in each other's lives, for this is the foundation of all rights.

This common good has its existence in the lives of members, each of whom has a conception of himself and

of his wellbeing through participation in an organised whole, apart from his particular momentary wants. This permanent conception demands a provision for possible self-satisfaction and possible self-expression, "the means of realising a will, which is, in possibility, a will for social good."[1] This is quite a different thing from the mere successive removal of wants successively arising, such as satisfies an animal. And in the social institution of property, beginning with the clan, and completed by the developed State, this "realised will," or permanent conception of wellbeing, takes its place as a right—that is to say, as a want socially recognised as demanding fulfilment. Man can only be fully realised as social when he is fully distinguished as individual. In the mere clan he is relatively unfree and unsocial.

2. We may illustrate this point by contrast with the position of a child in the family, or even of an animal. Removal of wants as they arise is the principle of our treatment of animals—no provision is needed in their case for possible self-expression demanded by the nature of their self in consequence of an idea of its own wellbeing as a whole. The same principle is applied in human life to a child in the family, and is sometimes the ideal, or gives the general type of the ideal, proposed for man in general. Approximating to this is the ideal suggested by Plato, which either denies property, like family life, to individuals (where he permits the one he permits the other), or regards it as a mere apparatus of social function in the narrowest sense—the tools of a man's trade, which, if this was all, need not be his own property. This is connected with the whole position of the individual and the family in Plato's view. The essence of this whole position is to think it enough if momentary needs of work and life are temporarily and successively met as they arise. They may be as liberally met as we please to imagine; that is not the essential point.

Let us take the child in the family as the extreme type, and leave out any imitation of grown-up life which his

[1] T. H. Green, *The Right of Private Property*, Works, vol. ii.

parents may introduce by way of discipline, by taking away what he wastes or spoils, and so forth. His relation to things has no unity corresponding to his moral nature. No nerve of connection runs through his acts in dealing with the external world. So with his food; he may waste or throw away his food at one meal, he gets none the less at the next (unless by way of discipline). He gets what is thought necessary quite apart from all his previous action. So too with his dress. The dress of a young child does not express his own character at all, but that of his mother. If he spoils his things, that makes no difference to him (unless as a punishment); he has what is thought proper for him at every given moment. So with travel, enjoyments, and education up to a certain point. What he is enabled to have and do in no way expresses his own previous action or character, except in as far as he is put in training by his parents for grown-up life. The essence of this position is, that the dealings of such an agent with the world of things do not affect each other, nor form an interdependent whole. He may eat his cake and have it; or he may not eat it and yet not have it. To such an agent the world is miraculous; things are not for him adjusted, organised, contrived; things simply *come* as in a fairy tale. The same is the case with a slave. Life is from hand to mouth; it has as such no totality, no future, and no past.

Now, private property is not simply an arrangement for meeting successive momentary wants as they arise on such a footing as this. It is wholly different in principle, as adult or responsible life differs from child-life, which is irresponsible. It rests on the principle that the inward or moral life cannot be a unity unless the outward life—the dealing with things—is also a unity. In dealing with things this means a causal unity, *i.e.* that what we do at one time, or in one relation, should affect what we are able to do at another time, or in another relation. I suspect that the difficulty in accepting this principle is largely due to a mistake about inward morality—to treating the pure will for good as if it could exist and constitute a moral being without capacity for external expression. This is

a blunder in principle. If all power of dealing effectively with things is conceived absent, inward morality, or the good will, vanishes with it. I will return to this point in dealing with the "no margin" doctrine.

Private property, then, is the unity of life in its external or material form; the result of past dealing with the material world, and the possibility of future dealing with it; the general or universal means of possible action and expression corresponding to the moral self that looks before and after, as opposed to the momentary wants of a child or of an animal. A grown man knows that if he does this he will not be able to do that, and his humanity, his power of organisation, and intelligent self-assertion, depend on his knowing it. If he wants to do something in particular ten years hence he must act accordingly to-day; he must be able in some degree to measure his resources. If he wants to marry he must fit himself to maintain a family; he must look ahead and count the cost, must estimate his competence and his character. That is what makes man different from an animal or a child; he considers his life as a whole, and organises it as such—that is, with a view to reasonable possibilities, not merely to the passing moment.

3. Certain limitations follow from this principle. Not all property or absence of property, as existing at a given time, is the pure expression of this social or spiritual necessity. In all actual social arrangements spiritual expression is thus obstructed. There is confusion, and therefore distortion. Seeking the self, man's true purpose and calling are metamorphosed into self-seeking. The means of complete life catch the eye, are noted as undeniably important, and from an absolutely relative end become a relatively absolute end. Against this blunder the mind violently reacts, and because the means falsely pretended it was an end, the mind in return will pronounce it not even a means, and thereby enormously aggravate the evil which the former fallacy had initiated.

Clearly the principle does not demand unlimited acquisition of wealth, if we disregard the definite mischief which may attach to the means adopted to limit it. It rests on

the conception of a common good, to be realised in individuals as moral and rational agents, and subject to this, all means for its realisation must be treated as a practical problem, turning on what is best in the long run for society as the external embodiment of character.

Are powers of bequest and alienation necessary to the idea of private property? At the dawn of history both in Greece and Rome the State is found introducing these, in its own interest, as against the family or clan, which it regarded as a dangerous competitor with itself. The opposition was then between power of bequest and unalterable family succession; now it is between power of bequest, usually to the family, and property not devolving at all, so that maintenance of bequest within limits is now in favour of the family. That ground must have full weight. A reason against compulsory devolution by equal division or the like is that it makes the several children's shares independent of character or capacity. But all these points are arguable; it should be noted, however, that limited ownership is objectionable *per se*. The social need is to make possession of property very responsive to the character and capacity of the owner. Thus prohibition of alienation is objectionable as tending to keep property in the hands of incompetent holders. It is quite reasonable to treat land differently from other materials, and differently in different countries, according to the supply of it and the demand for it, as conditioned by the nature of the chief industries and so forth.

In face of Collectivist ideals, what does our principle suggest? Society is to-day largely on a basis of wages and salaries; these may and do fulfil the principle of private property so long as we keep well away from the ideal of the child or slave. Salaries, to fulfil the postulate, must be, I should say, in some degree permanent and calculable —capable of being foreseen with probability, and capable of being dealt with by investment or some analogous process; if not, we approach the ideal of child or slave life by cutting the strings of continuity between all material dealings of the same person and making it impossible for his

life to be regarded as a whole; in plain language, we shall prevent his making plans.

I do not speak of wages being apportioned to service or to demand, because that is not the point of private property, though perhaps necessary or advisable on other grounds. The point of private property is that things should not come miraculously and be unaffected by your dealings with them, but that you should be in contact with something which in the external world is the definite material representation of yourself. If it were the case that self-utterance were becoming impossible in industry and regimented routine production were to be in future the only possible method of work, it would be still more important to maintain a unity in the material management of private life; but the question of the organisation of industry is really a separate question. Is it not enough, we may be asked, to know that one can have what is necessary and reasonable? No; that makes one a child. A man must know what he can count on and judge what to do with it. It is a question of initiation, plan, design, not of a more or less in enjoyment.

4. In alluding to objections, I do not speak of mere practical difficulties such as a growingly large scale organisation of industry. The London and North-Western Railway cannot be effectively private property in the sense in which a wheelbarrow can be; whether it is managed by the State or not makes but little practical difference in this impossibility. The principle of the unity of life on its external or material side does not ultimately depend upon the scale of industrial production. Rather it is a requirement which could be satisfied in very various ways. But I do not say that the destruction of small industries managed by individuals would be without a bad influence, especially in the minor arts.

Objections of principle all amount to preferring the ideal of the child in the family. The most plausible perhaps is the "no margin" argument. "You either have enough for your full wants at the moment, or you have not enough. If you have enough, you ought not to have

more; if you have not enough, then plainly it ought all to be expended on your momentary necessities." Thus, in either case, a permanent definite provision for possible self-expression is in principle objected to. By the hypothesis, life is cut down to the passing moment. This always strikes me as analogous to Plato's argument somewhere to show that one cannot make a mistake. "Either you know a thing, and then you cannot be wrong; or you do not, and then you can say nothing." The answer is, I suppose, in both cases, that human life is situated on the progressive margin, and its object and interest is to organise further the partly organised, not simply to rest at a given level. Man never has enough so long as his capacity for foresight and management, for treating life as a unity with a past and future, is not tasked to the full; and he never has too little to give effect to this capacity in some degree, so long as he is able to live a human life at all. The need for possessing a permanent nucleus in the material world is not subsequent to, nor accrues, so to speak, on the top of, all immediate needs, but is as deeply rooted in the mind as they are, and acts in all of them, and begins to form itself within them and against them, long before the current standard of comfort of any human society is attained. And this want is essential to humanity, and is itself a condition without which *human* comfort cannot exist. That, I suspect, is why the Workhouse is miserable, except in extreme cases of semi-imbecile dulness or of ascetic resignation. The forward look to the unity of life is abandoned, and an adult has accepted the status of a child. So much the greater is the need to narrow, instead of widening, the sphere of such slavish dependence. To deny, in principle, the need for a permanent provision for possible work and self-expression is to ignore the root-principle of human nature, and the connection of inward and outward morality, or of character and competence. It is also most important to note that the denial of property gives an enormous impulse to animal selfishness. It declares that my share is not for me to work with, to contrive and organise with, to express myself com-

pletely with, but simply to meet my wants from day to day. The surplus over the necessary is therefore earmarked to be spent on passing enjoyment—a horrible result.

The real cause of complaint to-day, I take it, is not the presence but the absence of property, together with the suggestion that its presence may be the cause of its absence. This does not immediately concern my argument, which is directed to showing what element in human life it represents; I am speaking, as Ruskin once said, not of what is possible, but of what is necessary. That society should to a great extent fail in satisfying a need of man's nature is nothing new, and the remedy for its failure is a practical problem; but no solution will be found in simply ignoring the need. All our work towards permanent organisation and improvement of conditions is to the good, as assisting the treatment of life as a whole, so long as we do not artificially introduce the ideal of the child or slave—of a life forbidden to organise its future, and restricted to receiving what is deemed necessary from day to day. I add one comparison, which strikes me as interesting. Property is no doubt liable to be stereotyped and transferred and accumulated, so that it loses all proportion to earnings or capacity. The advocates of the child-ideal cannot complain on this ground, because they disclaim all idea of apportionment to services, which disclaimer is a meeting-point of absolute communism and the extreme private property theory. But those who wish for an arrangement that should retain the idea of *earning*, by some quasi-competitive relation of salary to value or energy of service, so as to avoid in apportionment of advantages a total disregard of capacity to fulfil a social demand, should reflect on this, that the same sort of chance which transfers property to persons who have not earned it, asserts itself strongly now in salaried work, and would probably do so much more intensely if all work was salaried. The fact is, that much discharge of function—that which is in any way new or original—cannot be provided for in a scheme of salaries, because it is not antecedently known

to exist; so that in every large organisation by salaries we get a number of people who are doing possibly very good work, but not the work they are paid to do. The classical example is Burns (not John but Robert) as an exciseman. Every institution, an experienced head of institutions once said to me, carries some dead weight so far as its immediate purpose is concerned. This may be good enough for the whole community (or not), but such persons are not paid in respect of the services which they really discharge. They may have created a new function which none of the social managers have ever thought of or wanted, or they may be discharging one which really belongs to some other branch of the social service. In a complete social organisation by salaries for function there would be a great deal of this misplacing; and it might be rather demoralising. It would be analogous to the leisure class existing on unearned property; only its existence, while generally known, would be officially denied. It is well known that positions in our Civil Service have given and do give a substantial standing ground to eminent men of letters, from Robert Burns downwards. I do not suppose for a moment that they have proved other than exceedingly valuable servants of the State, but as a matter of principle their position would probably be defended in any case by the general voice on the ground that it is proper, and is creditable to maintain in the public service men eminent in other fields, so long as their official duty is reasonably well discharged. They can hardly, I imagine, as a rule, be those devoted officials on whose shoulders the public departments really rest. What I desire to point out is that in such a feeling the principle of unearned private property as contrasted with salary for services is in some degree asserting itself. Salary is, so to speak, subsequent and relative to its justification by work; unearned property is antecedent, and leaves the justification to follow. Where salary is the basis of an unanticipated social service, to which it is not intentionally relative, it takes on the character of private property obtained by chance, and is similarly antecedent to its justification. In a complete salaried scheme of society

re would be a good deal more of this chance-medley. ces would have to be found, and quite undoubtedly ıld be found, for good men, and would not always resent their true services to society. Men put into itions with one set of duties would employ them for ›ther. In proportion as this is met by requiring only a ıimum amount of service, and taking it to free the cial for his whole leisure-time, the principle of true ımunism and of private property is in some degree ›roached. The man is entirely supported in return for a tion of his work, and, therefore, in part not for what does, but because he has the good luck to be there. ıong the working classes, it must be remembered, this ıciple is already causing difficulty where the short-hour n compete in other industries; and from an extension it serious confusion might result; every one might be ng some one else's work. Now, if this principle of ecedent provision for chance cases of undetermined ction is certain to break in, by wresting predetermined ction from its avowed and organised vocation, it may well to recognise it as inevitable by permitting the ısference of property to those who have not earned it, ıer than to commit oneself to a system which pretends exclude what it necessarily admits. The affinity between nmunism and the effects of such transferable property, so far as both of them leave undetermined the special ustment of share to function, appears to me to be ious and interesting. It suggests that a private property tem, perhaps in addition to a wage system, is the ural development out of the perfect communism of the ıily, a certain affinity between the two being retained, l their difference arising simply from the difference ween the child who is unable to deal with his material roundings on his own responsibility, and the man whose nhood consists in his power and need so to deal with m.

The transference of property to those who have not ned it, however, is quite a matter for regulation in the ıeral interest, subject to the fact that a total prohibition

of transference would seriously maim the central principle of property, viz. the right and need to realise a conception of wellbeing relevant to the relation which makes the individual in society what he is. A man who could do nothing for his friends or for his family would have the heart cut out of his dealings with the material conditions of his life as a whole. The true principle of State interference with acquisition or alienation would refer to their tendency, if any, to prevent acquisition of property on the part of other members of society. In a small country especially this principle may well demand exceptional regulation of land tenure. On the other hand, the probable or demonstrated bad use of property is not by itself an adequate reason against the institution, though it may be a reason for restrictive legislation. The possible bad use is a condition of the possible good use, and the social mind cannot be realised in human individuals who are not at liberty to deal with the external conditions of life as instruments of permanent self-satisfaction and self-expression. For as far as the true human self is social, or is identified with a common good, it necessarily and inevitably is incapable of being satisfied, like that of a child or animal, with the removal of wants or needs from hour to hour, or from day to day. The principle, I hope, is clear; its practical application may take many forms in the future, as it has taken many in the past.

XVIII

THE REALITY OF THE GENERAL WILL

By B. Bosanquet

"There is often a great difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter looks only to the common interest; the former looks to private interest, and is nothing but a sum of individual wills; but take away from these same wills the plus, and minus, that cancel one another, and there remains, as the sum of the differences, the general will." "Sovereignty is only the exercise of the general will."[1]

This celebrated antithesis, the statement of which I have translated from Rousseau's own words, has the effect of setting a problem to which Rousseau himself scarcely finds an answer. The problem is emphasised by the various reasons and indications which make it difficult to believe that the action of any community is a mere sum of the effects of wholly independent causes operating on a number of separate individual minds. No doubt, the action of a community sometimes is, and often appears to be, the sum of effects of such independent causes. One man gives a certain vote because he hates Mr. A.; another man gives the same vote because he thinks Mr. B. will do something for his trade; and a third gives the same vote because of some one out of a thousand possible social reforms which he thinks the man he is voting for will help or will hinder, as the case may be. Now, assuming these causes to be independent of one another, the direction in which they will sum up is a question of chance. Of course it is deter-

[1] Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, Book II., chap. i. and chap. iii.

mined by causation, but it is not determined by any general cause, corresponding to a general element in the result which takes place. As related to the separate causes in operation, the general character of that result is a coincidence or matter of chance.

And this is, in fact, how Rousseau seems to regard it, and he therefore suggests what is practically, I should imagine, just the wrong method for eliminating private interest and getting at the general will. Let the citizens all vote as independent units, not organising themselves in groups or adjusting their views by private communication, and then, he thinks, as I understand him, the general interest will assert itself, as any general cause does in the elimination of chance among a great number of counteracting independent causes; that is, as he says, the independent causes, if present in sufficient numbers, may be expected to cancel, and the general cause will have a visible effect in deciding the question. If private interests are equally balanced, the public interest will affect some minds on both sides enough to turn the scale. This element of regard to the public interest is what he calls the general will, as distinct from the will of all.

I do not think that this view is false; but it is not adequate to the action of a very complex society with elaborate constructive tasks before it. It is rather adapted to a plebiscite on a single question, in which the general will is represented by a conscious though feeble inclination to what is admittedly the public interest. The discouragement of discussion and of organisation in groups, which he insists on in order to keep the chances fair, *i.e.* to keep all the private interests independent of one another, would make all complicated legislation impossible, and is quite incompatible with the method which I shall maintain, that necessity prescribes for the formation of the general will. He so far admits this, that the ideal legislator is for him a person outside the community, who interprets the general will into a system of laws.

What we have got then, so far, is a problem or a paradox: the idea of a will whose sole aim is the common

interest, although it can exist as a will only in the minds of the human individuals who make up the community, and all of whom are for the most part occupied with their own individual interests. There is no social brain other than and separate from the brain of individuals, and because we seldom face this difficulty fairly, our great modern gospel, that society is an organism, is becoming a little stale before it has rendered us the one service which it might perhaps be able to render—that is, to make us ask ourselves in what properties or relations of individuals in society there resides anything corresponding on behalf of society to the brain or mind of each separate individual. We know that many not contemptible people speak of the individual members of any community as mostly fools, and say that the wise and those who are in the right are always in the minority, and that the ordinary man picks up his opinions out of a newspaper, and adjusts them by conversation with two or three other persons no better informed than himself. The expressions, more or less in this sense, of so eminent a writer as Mr. Bryce, in his discussion of Public Opinion in the third volume of the work on the *American Commonwealth*, were what I had chiefly in my mind when I resolved to try and examine this paradox, which in that discussion Mr. Bryce fully recognises. No candid man can altogether, I think, deny the judgments to which I am referring, so far as they deal with the general capacity for intellectual processes in unfamiliar matter. Mr. Bryce indeed tries to blunt the paradox by pointing out that the so-called educated classes are *not* especially fitted, by the training which has hitherto been customary, for dealing with important practical questions; but this does not help us to see how the bulk of the community *are* able and willing to deal rightly with such questions in the common interest. If the majority of separate individuals are, on any question immediately put before them, more likely to miss the common interest than to hit it, both from blindness and from selfishness, which cannot practically be distinguished, why does not society come to grief? Aristotle says that all the citizens taken together

may have more wisdom than any one. Is there any meaning in this?

Is it true that the intelligent pursuit by the individual of his private interests necessarily in the system of things conduces to the preservation of the community? Not if we mean by his private interests merely certain aims which are definitely before his mind, which he might tell you are the ruling objects of his life. On the other hand, if we say that the pursuit of his private interests *as*, on the whole, he pursues them, conduces to the preservation of the community, that is pretty much a tautology.

What necessity is there that this mode of action and judgment should have in it any general reference whatever? When and why is the general will a reality within individual wills?

I have taken some time to state the paradox, because I think that the facts which it indicates are of extreme importance, even if the explanation offered is inadequate. I will now attempt an explanation, borrowing in some degree the ideas of modern psychology.

By an individual will I mean a human mind considered as a machine, of which the parts are ideas or groups of ideas, all tending to pass into action, but liable to be counteracted or again to be reinforced by each other. The groups of ideas are connected with each other by associations of all degrees of intimacy, but each is, for the most part, capable of being awakened into action by the appropriate stimulus without awakening more remotely associated groups, and the will, for the time being, consists of those ideas which are guiding attention and action. The ideas are not thrown together anyhow, but are more or less organised; some being of a nature which enables them to serve as a clue or plan in which others find their places, and in a sense every group of ideas might be called a single idea, and all that there is in the mind has the character of a single idea—that is to say, all its parts are connected in various degrees, and more or less subordinated to some dominant ideas which, as a rule, dictate the place and importance of the others. We know what a ruling

idea is: it is one that has got the control of the mind, and subordinates all the other ideas to itself. This mental system, with its dominant ideas in relation to external action, is the individual will.

Now, at first sight all these individual wills, or minds in action, are separate machines, locked up in separate boxes, each with its indicator outside, and the response which each of them will make to a stimulus from without is determined by its own structure, which is again determined by its own private history. If we go no further than this we seem not to get any hint of a general will, but only a sum of individual wills, which need not have any reference to each other's ideas.

But we can perhaps go behind this. The individual will is shaped by its dominant ideas. What, on the whole, determines which ideas get the upper hand? The answer seems to be that the ideas which tend to be victorious are those distinguished by logical capacity; because they are especially able to marshal the content of consciousness in a way suitable to themselves, checking and defeating the ideas that cannot be brought into their system, and reinforcing themselves by those that can. All practical action tends to give the victory to such ideas as these, while modifying and extending them. Any suggestion which enables you to deal with matter that you have to arrange is maintained in your mind and reinforced by the successful action to which it leads, and receives new content, which it embodies in itself, from the combinations which arise in carrying it out. Other suggestions, that "would not do," as we say, are driven out and disappear. Still, all this is a play of ideas within the individual mind locked up in its separate box.

But now, does the quality which makes certain ideas dominant in one individual mind ensure their having any relation to the ideas which are dominant in other individual minds? Under certain conditions, clearly this is the case. These conditions are, in brief, community of life and of experience. Ideas do not spring from nowhere; they are the inside which reflects the material

action and real conditions that form the outside. So that the common life shared by the members of a community involves a common element in their ideas, not merely in their notions of things about them, though this is very important, but more especially in the dominant or organising ideas which rule their minds. For the matter which is before their minds to be organised consists in great measure of connections between persons, and life simply cannot go on unless the organising ideas in different people's minds with reference to these connections correspond definitely to one another. This is, of course, a truism, except that it is not always driven home with reference to the actual shape and content which it implies in individual minds.

It may be said this only means that different persons' minds in the same country have a good deal in common; it does not mean that they participate in any conception of a common interest, but merely that they are influenced in the same way by the same appeal, with a certain general result, which is no more *in* each of them than the waving of a field of corn before the wind is in each separate stalk of corn. Well, this comparison is just for some cases,—for the case of a mob, for instance, when they act as one man, under the influence of an identical sentiment of anger or cupidity. This is an irrational form of the general will, as a burst of feeling is of the individual will; but it is definitely general in so far as it is owing to the operation of the same sentiment in all the minds at once.

But there are stronger cases than this. Just as the material working of any industry or institution is not complete in a single person, but consists in corresponding though different actions of different persons, so it is with the dominating ideas which in different individual minds represent this working. Therefore, if we could see these minds, which are locked up in boxes tolerably like each other on the outside, we should perceive that each of them bears quite a definite reference to the others outside itself; in short, it is not really a complete machine, as the body, though to some degree marked and moulded by its

habitual occupation, appears to be, but is only part of a machine, of which the other parts are the minds of other persons with whom the first is in connection. The proof of this lies in the fact that external life is organised, which organisation again consists in the fact that the dominant ideas of the persons who participate in this life constitute, when taken together, a machine whose parts play into one another.

Then we may identify the general will of any community with the whole working system of dominant ideas which determines the places and functions of its members, and of the community as a whole among other communities. The system is never quite harmonious; readjustment is always going on, but the direction of this readjustment is determined by the forces in collision together with the other forces of the machine. Both the more important workings of the machine, and especially the direction of its readjustment, are the most familiar *expression* of the general will. But the general will itself is the whole assemblage of individual minds, considered as a working system, with parts corresponding to one another, and producing as a result a certain life for all these parts themselves.

Such a conception seems illusory, because it is hard to define exactly where the thing which it describes begins and ends; but really in modern philosophy nothing can be parted sharply at the point of transition; it is enough if the central phenomena in each region are clear and distinguishable.

I will mark it off by three negatives.

The general will cannot be identified with the decision of a community by vote upon any single issue. Every such decision is an expression or consequence of the general will, but needs interpretation in order to say what direction of movement it really represents. In short, the general will is a system in motion, and cannot be expressed in a single proposition. And no system of voting can secure its expression, because it does not exist in a form that can be embodied in a vote.

Again, the general will is not identical with public opinion, considered as a set of judgments which form the currently expressed reflection upon the course of affairs. It may include these current notions or part of them, but it certainly includes much more, because the ideas that dominate the will do not always appear in reflection, or at least not with the importance which they have in life. The general will is more a system of wills than a system of reflections, and appears in action quite as much as in discussion.

Again, it is not merely the *de facto* tendency of all that is done by members of the community, though it is much more like this than like a vote or a set of opinions. It *is* to a great extent a *de facto* tendency, but only in so far as this tendency reveals active ideas with reference to the connection of persons or groups of persons. Other tendencies than these do not directly concern the organisation of life, and therefore do not directly form part of the active scheme of society.

Take two examples from opposite extremes in mental development. An agricultural labourer thinks, I suppose, chiefly about making his living and supporting his family. His choice of where he will work and what kind of farm work pays him best does not greatly affect the nature of his connection with other people, being all within the same general scheme. But, although he does not reflect—or even if he does not reflect—on this general scheme, yet it is represented in the shape of his mind—that is, in his customary active ideas, and in their limitations. Now, these active ideas of his in their general character—*i.e.* the general character and limits of what he is prepared to do and to expect with reference to other persons,—this is the factor of the general will operative in his mind. It is acted on by his daily life, and rests upon that life; but it is rather the outline or scheme of that life than the everyday details of it.

A dramatic poet, again, will exercise his conscious choice about his subjects and his form of writing, and so forth. All this makes no direct difference to other people,

and they cannot directly help him in it. Society cannot write a play. But if, for example, a school of really great dramatists were to arise in England to-day, the result might be to remould the working ideas in their own and other minds. The theatre would force itself, as a matter to be taken account of, into the mental systems of individuals, and in doing so would modify their dominant notions as to the place of art in national life, and so there would be a tendency of one kind or another which would enter into the active scheme or logical machine of social relations as a factor in the general will.

After these three negatives, I will say affirmatively that we may identify the general will with public opinion in a pregnant sense; not as consisting in the things said in the newspapers, but as the *actual* tendency of the whole process in which the necessary organising ideas of all individual minds in the community are factors.

The corollary from these suggestions, which is chiefly of interest to us, concerns the process of formation of the general will, or of public opinion in this pregnant sense.

It is not essentially superficial nor sentimental. It is essentially logical.

What is the root of the whole matter? It is nothing less than the correspondence with each other of the shapes taken by separate minds, each under the stress of its particular experience giving the victory to those ideas which are able to grapple with the matter pressed upon it. If the external life of the community works as a system, then this internal life must work as a system also; the one reflects the other.

Therefore, though it seems, as we said, as though most people are wrong when they express their opinions, and as if they pick them up from hearsay or from newspapers by sheer chance, this is to a great extent a *mere* appearance. Every person who does anything which is a necessary function in the community has in virtue of this function, which is mirrored in the shape of his leading active ideas, a definite position in the logical system of the community. So far as his mind reflects the real necessities of his active

life he is on solid ground, and his will is so far a factor in the general will, because his life—which is his will seen from the outside—is a factor in the general life. If we all understood our own active ideas completely and rightly in relation to those of others, then we should have the whole general will in our explicit consciousness.

But, as it is, no individual ever can have this, for two principal reasons:—

First, we are never thoroughly aware even of our own practical ideas. The will is a great mass of associated ideas guiding attention and action, of which very different portions come into play in different contexts, and our description of which in general language, however honest we are, is not infallibly true, but, just like our description of any complicated phenomenon outside us, depends on our skill, patience, and truthfulness. Nothing is commoner than to succeed in telling a man something about his own conscious action which he really did not know till you told him. Especially, the nature of practical ideas consists very much in their limitations, and of these, except by intellectual self-criticism, we are not aware. A man may honestly believe that he has no prejudice against perfect social equality, and a short cross-examination will often show him that he has a strong prejudice of the kind. We are not conscious, either of all the influences active in our will, or of its limitations.

Secondly, no one, not the greatest statesman or historical philosopher, has in his mind, even in theory, much less as a practical object, the real development in which his community is moving. In modern philosophy the contrast between man and nature is apt to be far too sharply drawn at this point, as if the whole moral world was consciously constructed by man. In very great men the relation of conscious purpose to historical result seems sometimes—as in Cavour, for example—to be considerable; but, on the whole, we are to the structure of legal, political, and economic organisation like coral insects to a coral reef. All these things, and the body of science itself, are on one side natural products—that is to say, that, although con-

scious purpose works in them, the effect it produces is always part of a system which is more than any particular agent intended. The process always needs the future to explain its real tendency.

Thus the general will is only in part self-conscious, and in as far as an attempt is made to formulate it in judgments it seems to become fallible. For then it ceases to be fact, and becomes interpretation of fact.

Still, it is important, in thinking of the formation of the general will with a view to its interpretation, to remember what kind of facts it consists of. The solid basis for every one is in his own practical will determined by the real necessities of his life in discharging a function in society. The process of interpretation and rationalisation of this will is then technically a process of criticism—that is to say, of adjusting the bearings of our whole view of life to the solid data of our own necessary working ideas in relation to those of others.

Now, this process again is not entirely conscious. It has two forms—practical organisation and reflective discussion. In practical organisation, ideas adjust themselves to each other without consciousness of anything beyond an immediate daily purpose, and it is only after a long interval that people wake up and find perhaps the entire relations of classes and of industry changed as it were in their sleep. This practical organisation is probably the most important phase in the formation of the general will. Of course it includes conflict within the law. And the second phase, discussion, if it is to be of any service, ought really to be the same thing in a reflective form — that is, contrivance, organisation, ascertainment by criticism of solid data, consisting in reasonable necessities, and their adjustment in a working system, such as to satisfy them all.

Now, of course these two processes pass into one another, and will more and more do so. And the two together really make up a very great part of life, so far as the persons concerned participate in a common experience. Every person is thus always being moulded into a logical unit much more than he is aware, and

the casual opinions which he expresses do not really represent the content of his will or the process by which it is formed.

We must modify the theory to admit of our belonging to more than one community. The different ideas which rule us in different relations allow easily of this. The communities to which we belong are now like a nest of boxes inside one another; but we cannot effectively share the general will of any community with which we have no common life and experience. Whether humanity can yet be said to have a general will is at least doubtful.

I do not think I am trenching on practical politics if I illustrate the importance which I attach to the unconscious or semi-conscious logic of life in contact with our neighbours by a reference to Mr. Hare's election scheme, the essence of which is that the constituency is de-localised. I once spoke of this to the late Professor Green, being myself much fascinated by its ingenuity, and he replied, "I rather despise all those schemes for detaching people from their locality." Mill, on the other hand, in the *Autobiography*, speaks of it, we remember, as a real triumph of political contrivance.

What I desire to point out is merely that, for good or evil, I think men would judge quite differently, acting under such a scheme, from the way in which they judge when they act in their locality. Everything depends on the context to which one's views and action have to be adjusted. If you have to fight out a set of opinions in practice and in discussion among your neighbours, that is quite a different process from letting the returning officer look out a few thousand people in Great Britain who happen to agree with you on a single point. In the one case your whole life is really an argument, both unconscious and conscious, with reference to the general working scheme of society. In the other case you simply pronounce a single casual reflective judgment. It appears to me an apt illustration of the general or organic will as contrasted with the will of all as a number of units.

I do not say that locality is a necessary condition. I

only say that it is a simple case of the necessary condition, of which there may be other cases.

Well, then, how does all this apply to matters of very special information either about distant countries or about the technique of management in difficult concerns, which the community as a whole undertakes? Here, no doubt, Mr. Bryce's account becomes much more true. We know what sort of life we want for ourselves and others, but we are not generally competent to construct it *in unfamiliar relations*. In our own life, as I have tried to explain, the thing works itself out by a self-adjusting process, because, whether we *know* what is wanted or not, we ourselves *are* the want, and behave accordingly.

The result is, then, that the general will is a process continuously emerging from the relatively unconscious into reflective consciousness. And the reflective consciousness does its work best when it as nearly as possible carries on, in self-criticism and adjustment of purposes, the same moulding of the individual mental system, as part of a machine in which other mental systems correspond to it, as goes on unconsciously in the formation of the everyday practical will.

Is the view which I have suggested hostile to the theoretical study of social conditions? I should be very sorry if anything that I have said appeared to have such a tendency. But it is not a bad thing to bear in mind that all knowledge, whether practically or theoretically employed, is only real and vital when it is the extension of a process like that which I have been describing. Books cannot contain knowledge in a perfectly vital form; they are rather instruments or materials of knowledge than knowledge itself. In this science differs from fine art; poetry, for example, is destroyed if we destroy the particular form which it has in a book; but knowledge hardly exists for us till we have destroyed the form which it has in a book. It must be recast in the intelligence,—that is, interpreted and criticised bit by bit till we have made it all of one tissue with our own vital experience—our experience of the matter in question in its most real form, whatever that may

be, whether given in observation only, or in practice as well. When this is accomplished, and not before, the knowledge is really knowledge—that is, it is present as intelligence in our view of life or nature, and not as a recollection of something printed in a book. Such intelligence, however wide-reaching, always begins at home, both in social matter and in abstract science; there is always some point where we are more especially in contact with reality, and from which we extend our ideas by analogy. In all social matters this point is furnished by our own necessarily dominant ideas prescribed by our individual life. Therefore, I say that all vital speculation is a process analogous to that which I have described as the formation of the general will, and speculation upon social matters is actually an extension of this process, ultimately radiating from the same centre. The end of the whole inquiry is to understand life, and we are not likely to understand any other life until after we have understood that which is at our doors.

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